PLAYSTATION® MAGAZINE

PSM2

EVERY BIG GAME REVIEWED INSIDE!

DRIVER, FSW TEN HAMMERS OUTRUN 2006, GODFATHER AND MORE! ONLY IN PSM2!

PLAYING PS LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

ISSUE 73 ■ MAG+DVD+TIPS BOOK ■ £3.99

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gamesradar.com

Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

APRIL 2006 £3.99

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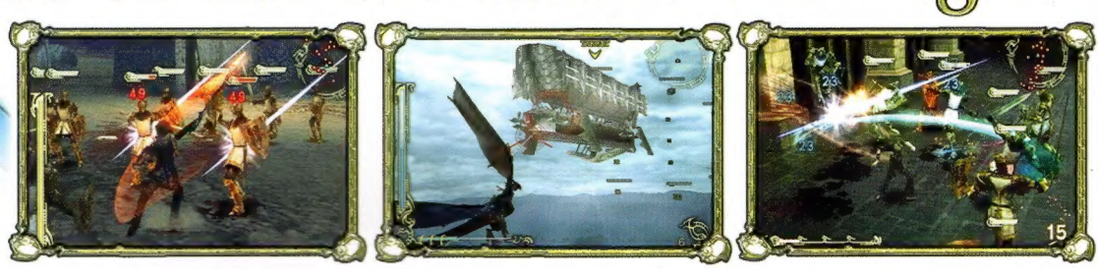

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PlayStation.2

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DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

Who flares wins! Can the new Driver save the day or is this too little too late? Flip to page 44 for the full story.

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THIS MONTH YOU NEED TO READ...

HEARTS ATTACK

KINGDOM HEARTS 2

This RPG is the closest you'll ever get to going out with the Little Mermaid. Surely that's worth £40 right there.

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DON THE WISER

GODFATHER

How many clichés can we use in our exclusive review of EA's mobster movie tie-in? Offers we can't refuse? Sleepy fishes? We've got the lot.

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PS3 LATEST NEWS

PS3 – SHOTS AND INFO

Yet more information on the gaming equivalent of heaven. But the signs aren't good for that UK launch.

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BLACK – BUSTED OPEN

Black – it's a beauty, but it's a toughy. We bust guts to bring you the only guide you'll need.

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YOU NEED TO WATCH...

ISSUE 73'S FREE DVD

WE DON'T CELL OURSELVES SHORT, Y'KNOW

Sam Fisher is back and – der der DER! – he's in jail! Witness the magnitude of the new *Splinter Cell*. And feel the buffness of *Tourist Trophy* – it's *Gran Turismo* with bikes. Plus check out our lush PS3 movies.

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Conte

PLAYING PLAYSTATION 2, LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

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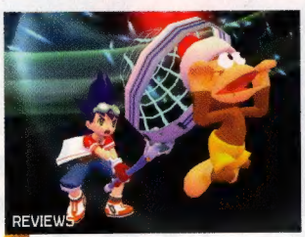

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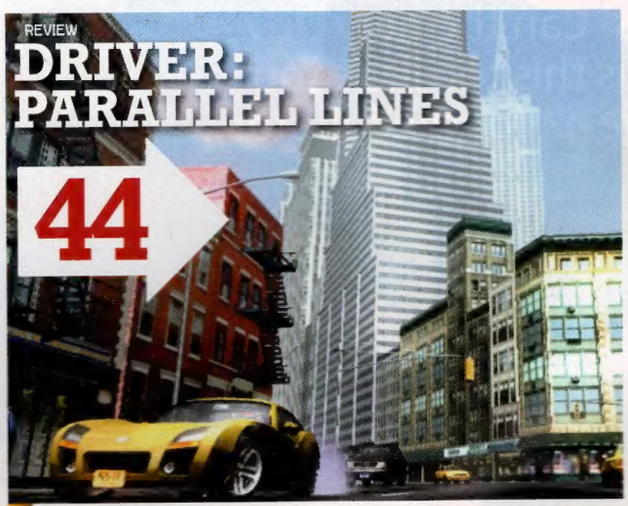

★ The newest *Driver* screeches into our Court of Judgement – and it's... flip to 44.

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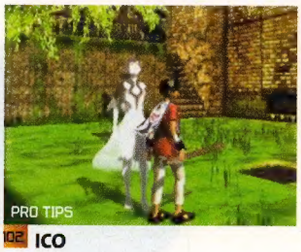

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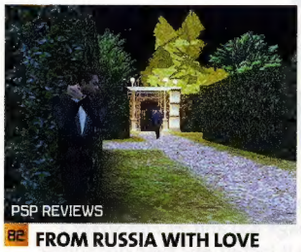

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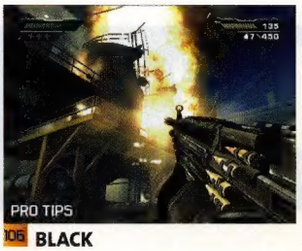

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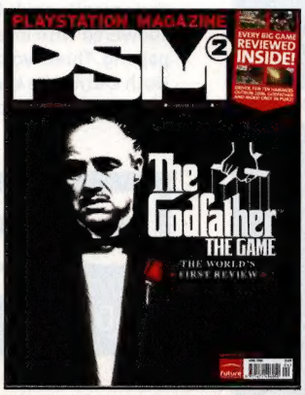

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PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Email: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK
Tel: 01225 442244 • Fax: 01225 446019

SLEEPING WITH...

Editor Daniel 'The Fishes' Griffiths
Art Editor Milf 'The Enemy' Coppock
Deputy Editor Daniel 'Mr Cuddly Bunny' Dawkins
Production Editor David 'One Eye Open' Cook
Deputy Art Editor Rich 'The Lights On' Broughton
Staff Writer Nathan 'Special Magazines Under The Pillow' Irvine
Staff Writer Andrew 'Sailors' Kelly

Contributors James White, Sarah Kennett, Steve Bailey, Steve Williams, Joel Snape, Kirsten Kearney, Peter Webber, Ben Richardson, Nick Ellis

ADVERTISING

Call: 01225 442244
Advertising Director Jayne Caple
Head of Sales Clare Williamson
Advertising Manager Clair Raithby

DISPLAY ADVERTISING:
Head Of Trading Scott Longstaff
Account Managers Anne Mead-Green, Dan Robinson, Andrew Church, James Watson

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:
Senior Sales Executive Alby Donnelly
Sales Executive Stuart Harris

PRODUCTION

Production Manager Rose Griffiths
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Non-Executive Chairman Roger Parry
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Managing Director Robert Price
Group Finance Director John Bowman
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Head Of International Licensing Tim Hudson
Genius Mike Goldsmith

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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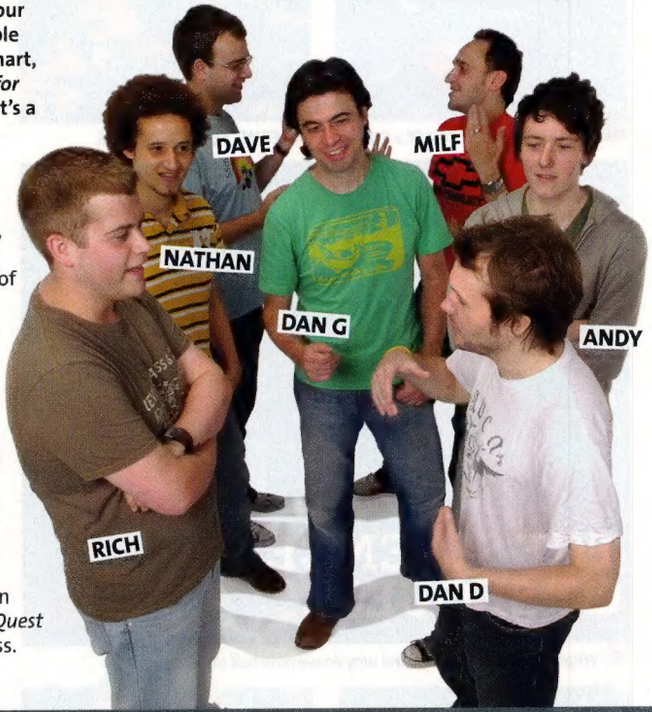
GUNS? GRAFFITI? CRIME? BEHIND THE SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS, THE SUN SHINES...

Look, we'll get back to driving Lamborghinis, firing AK47s and 'encouraging' local butchers to join our gang by smashing their face into the sausage counter – a few jolly scenes from *Driver: Parallel Lines* (reviewed on pg44), and our World Exclusive cover game, *The Godfather* (pg34) if you're wondering – in a second, because right now, it's time to hoist the party bunting, pat yourselves on the back and raise your (cardboard) sword to the sky. As we speak, Sony's incredible *Shadow Of The Colossus* is top of the All Formats games chart, ousting the infinitely more urban, and predictable, *Need for Speed: Most Wanted* from its nine-week reign at the top. It's a Hannibal from A-Team moment. Plan. Together. Loving it.

And... *and*... the so urban it breathes-paint-and-bum-puffs-graffiti *Mark Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* only debuted at Number 25 (despite being actually good). Could this mean <crack out the De La Soul, ditch the 50 Cent> that the days of gritty, urban, hurty, depressing games are coming to an end? Is this the birth of a rainbow-coloured, *macho* (we're not *girls*, OK?), daisy age, where hedgehogs can snaffle rings under blue skies, without being chased by mutant siblings with Uzis and faces like they've just quaffed a six-day old beefburger milkshake? Not quite – but the signs are good.

Flip to page 60. We defy the hardest of 50 Cent lovin' street-fighting urban footballers not to look at the pictures of Donald Duck, Sora and Goofy riding side-saddle with Tron, or singing Under the Sea with the Little Mermaid in *Kingdom Hearts 2*, and not feel a little bit of their granite souls tickle with glee. It's brilliant. A game showered with love, not laboured with hate. No? Turn to page 19. Three words: Lego Han Solo. Hmm? Three more: In Hoth Outfit. We *knew* you'd crack. Dammit, with *Dragon Quest VIII* due in April in the UK, even Andy's smili – scowling less.

Then there's *Hitman: Blood Money* (page 14), all-new *Scarface* (page 18), *25 to Life* (page 64) and, er, *Fifa Street 2* (page 50). Oh, well. Nice while it lasted, eh? Even our sunny days have an inner-urban development zone. Still, at least there's *hope*, and with PS3 currently due in 2023, the rainbows, pastures and sad-eyed colossi of PS2 have never looked better. The future's bright. But today is *blinding*. **The PSM2 Team**



PSM2 MAGAZINE PROMISE...

PSM2 is 100% independent. We write what we want, when we want. We don't ridicule popular opinion for the sake of controversy. Or generate hype without fact. Well, not *often*. We're not afraid to admit to our mistakes. And we're always first to put things right. We say it as we see it. Fact.

Here at PSM2 we play every game we preview – that means genuine hands-on opinion, not what we've read about on the net.
We're gamers just like you – and that's means we go into the kind of detail you demand. Check our sidebars for the latest facts and stats or screenshots that show off all the newest features.
PSM2 is 100% editorially independent! You won't read the same quality of hard-hitting, informed, accurate – and, crucially, passionate – reviews anywhere else. And we can review games and reveal hardware other mags have to keep secret.
We feature more screenshots than any other magazine. And the smallest small type. If you're reading this, email in and say 'My eyes are like moons'.

PS2 ON THE DVD

PS2/PS3 ON DVD

LATEST

Just in! The very latest gaming vids

TOURIST TROPHY

- BROKEN SWORD: ANGEL OF DEATH
- SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT
- DEVIL MAY CRY 3: SPECIAL EDITION
- THE REGIMENT
- ROGUE GALAXY
- DISGAEA 2
- THE PLAN

HANDS ON

Exclusive footage from all the hot new games

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

- 25 TO LIFE
- FIFA STREET 2
- SONIC RIDERS
- DRAKENGARD 2
- XENOSAGA: EPISODE 3
- ZATHURA

REVIEWS

Reviews for new PS2 games with commentary

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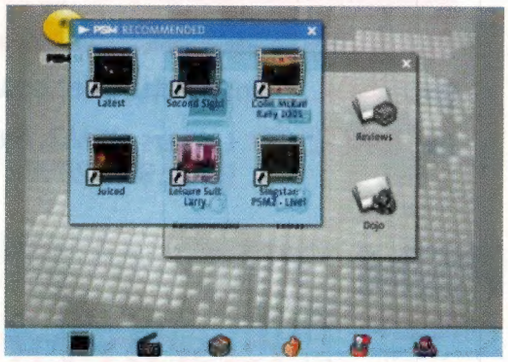
- METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE
- MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP
- TOCA RACER DRIVER 3
- CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS
- SEGA CLASSICS COLLECTION
- FATAL FRAME 3
- THE PLAN
- PAC-MAN WORLD 3
- JACKED

PS3

The newest PS3 movies around

- METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
- KILLZONE
- MOTORSTORM

HOW IT WORKS



■ Latest: Not a sub-menu, but a movie in its own right. This is the very latest vids, squeezed in at the last minute. And now you can skip forwards and back!

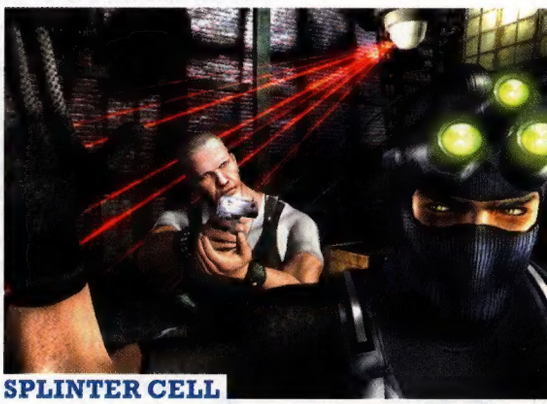
■ Hands-on: So big it comes in two parts. Select your part then click on the video you like the look of from the preview icons.

■ Reviews: All the latest games reviewed – complete with the famous PSM2 team commentary. Sick of hearing Andy wibbling on in Scottish? Click down ⊟ to switch to the game soundtrack.

■ PS3 and PSP: Now we have sections for the hottest new games on both new formats.

■ Recommended: Quick links to our personal favourite bits.

■ Extras: Quirky clips and... well... extra stuff and credits to enjoy.



SPLINTER CELL

PS2 ON THE DVD

PSP ON DVD

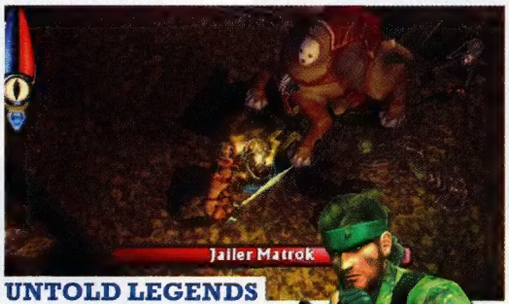
It's here! PSP finally arrives in the UK and, in order to get you up and running with movies on Memory Stick as fast as possible, we've included a batch of movies in a special folder on your DVD.

Simply insert the disc into your computer (you do have a DVD-ROM drive on your computer don't you?) and 'Open' the disc. You should see a folder on there called 'PSM2 PSP STUFF'. We recommend that you drag this folder to your desktop, thus copying it there.

Open this folder and you'll find a folder called 'Movie Files' (and one called 'PSM2 Reviews To Go' – more on that to the right). Open this folder and you'll find folders for loads of PSP games. Inside each of these is a PSP movie ready to be played on PSP.

Connect your PSP to your PC and make a folder called MP_ROOT next to your PSP folder. Make a folder called 100MNV01 inside this. Now copy these movie files (all called M4V... etc...) into this folder. Now just eject, disconnect, then click and play from your PSP's Video menu to view.

SILENT HILL



UNTOLD LEGENDS

PSP

The latest footage from the best new PSP games

- UNTOLD LEGENDS 2
- METAL GEAR EXPERIENCE
- SILENT HILL EXPERIENCE

PSM2 REVIEWS TO GO

■ Want the ultimate source of all PS2 knowledge in your pocket? Then load up your PSP with Reviews To Go!

Simply insert your DVD into your computer (as described above) and open the 'PSM2 Reviews To Go' folder. Then do as it says – copy the files inside the next folder into you PSP's Photo folder – you'll need 4.6Mb free. No 'Photo' folder? Then your stick needs formatting. On the main menu head left to 'Settings', down to 'System Settings' and then press ⊗. Now go down to 'Format Memory Stick' and press ⊗. Hit ⊗ again and your stick'll be wiped and a set of folders created on board, including the 'Photo' one you need for our reviews to go.

Drag the two 'Reviews To Go' files into this 'Photos' folder. Now eject your PSP and go to your Photos menu. You should see two files. One contains all our PS2 scores, one all our PSP scores. Select the one you want in order to view it.

Got a long thin strip on your screen rather than a massive all-conquering database of every game ever reviewed? Then press ⊗ to bring up the options. Choose 'View' and click it to switch to widescreen. The full Reviews To Go will appear. Use the stick to scroll.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "I DON'T WANT A MAN THAT LOOKS LIKE HITLER'S UGLY BROTHER"

Letters

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PS2 UNIVERSE

► EMAIL: psm2@futurenet.co.uk – subject line 'Letters'

► WRITE TO: Letters, PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

PSM2 WINNER!

Every issue, the writer of the Star Letter gets our eternal thanks... Oh, PLUS a red hot package of PS2 goodies fresh from the PSM2 booty chest. So entertain us and your fellow readers. Let the prattle commence!

GOOD THINGS ABOUT ICO #43: "IT'S GOT AN ABSOLUTELY CRACKING WINDMILL"

► **Dear PSM2,**

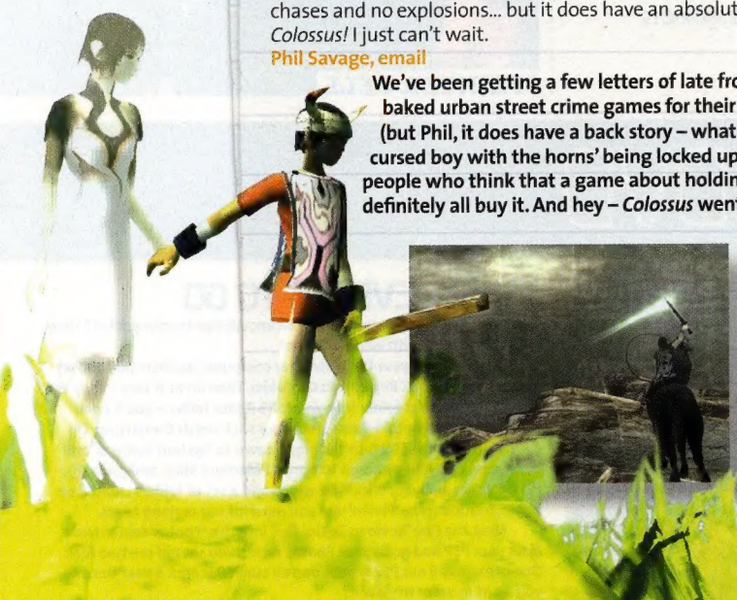
Great review of *Ico* this month. I was one of the seven people who bought the game when it originally came out, and I've started urging people to get it this time round. As much as my collection is thoroughly peppered with the *Grand Theft Autos*, the *Burnouts* and the *Metal Gears*, I still consider *Ico* to be one of the best games I own.

Sure, it's not the kind of game your going to want to sit and play in front of your mates – I mean for crying out loud, you're playing a kid who spends most of the game dragging round a vitamin D deficient poster child, and the only violence to be found involves you biffing shadows round the noggin with a massive stick. Hell, there's no back story and the few lines of dialogue that exist take place in a language that your character can't understand – but still, the game carries more emotional weight than anything else there is out there at the moment.

The graphics are superb, the puzzles interesting and the music works brilliantly. Those that have already had the pleasure of experiencing this game should be shouting about it from the rooftops because there's more than a small chance that it will completely fail to sell copies again. After all, people tend to switch off when you tell them about a game that has no guns, no blood, no prostitutes, no car chases and no explosions... but it does have an absolutely cracking windmill. Roll on *Shadow Of The Colossus!* I just can't wait.

Phil Savage, email

We've been getting a few letters of late from people who are starting to look beyond half-baked urban street crime games for their thrills. There's no doubt that *Ico* is an utter classic (but Phil, it does have a back story – what did you think that massive intro scene about 'the cursed boy with the horns' being locked up forever was all about?) regardless of the cries of people who think that a game about holding a girl's hand is for big wussies. But you should definitely all buy it. And hey – *Colossus* went to number one! How about that, eh?



LAST OF THE SUMMER EQUINE: *Colossus* is as great as *Ico*. Plus it's got a lovely horse.

GOLD METAL

► **Dear PSM2,**

I recently got bored and started playing *Metal Gear 1* again, just to refresh my mind on the story. Here are some things that I've concluded:

1) As Shadow Moses is set six years after *Metal Gear 2: Outer Heaven* (which was set in 1999), it is in 2005, meaning *MGS2*, fours years later, is set in 2009, and *MGS4*, ten years after that, is therefore in 2019.

2) Sniper Wolf refers to Big Boss as 'Saladin', a name which is yet to be explained in the *Metal Gear* series.

3) It's still the best *Metal Gear*, both for its time and for its storyline. For example, the bosses are all fresh, without being too strange (Like in *MGS3*), or too normal (*MGS2*).

4) It's definitely one of the best games of all time, and anyone who hasn't played it needs to get it. NOW!

James Nelms, Telford

All good points, and perhaps all mysteries will be revealed in *MGS4*. Knowing Koj, though, probably not, or at least not in a way that makes sense. Saladin? That's 'cos he's on a diet. He's always getting the 'salad in'.

METAL FEAR

► **Dear PSM2,**

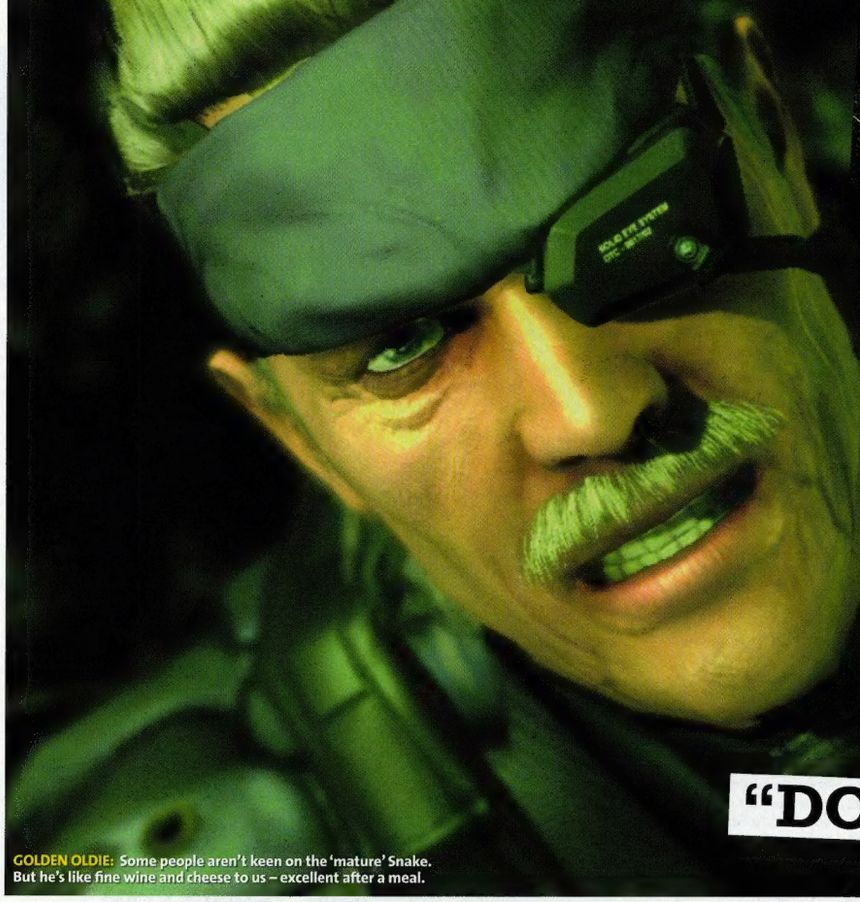
So Kojima is back, huh. Good news i thought. It lasted until I saw the *MGS4* trailer (the one on PS3). Having seen *Killzone* and *Motorstorm* and

GOIN' POSTAL

There are many ways to describe the residents of Goin' Postal, but one word would do – nutjobs. Oh, there's loads of space left. Bum. OK, here's a few more – mentalists, space brains, wacko jockeys, asylum fashionistas... will that do?

GAY TIMES
I'll go out with Andy. I'm single. And I'm quite gay. X.
Jason Mitchell, email
How romantic. Andy will be in touch... hey, where's he gone?

DUCKING HELL
Don't you just love ducks?



GOLDEN OLDIE: Some people aren't keen on the 'mature' Snake. But he's like fine wine and cheese to us – excellent after a meal.

SPEAK TO THE TEAM MARCH 24TH

CALL THE PSM2 HOTLINE!

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YES, now YOU can SPEAK to PSM2! Call the Hotline and leave us a message at any time, day or night! Alternatively, call us LIVE between 2pm and 5pm on Friday March 24th, when we'll be answering the phone in person! And it ain't no '60p per second' porno line either! Bargain!

"DO CERTAIN TASKS LIKE COOKING DINNER"

believed it was real time, I was very dissapointed with *MGS4*s grapics. *MSG3* on PS2 was clearly the best looking game on the console and I was expecting the same from *MGS4*. But it pales in comparison.

Knowing now that *Killzone* and *Motorstorm* were most likely pre-rendered, I should be happy *MGS4* looks as it does – but I'm not, because I was counting on games to look like those two. The worst thing about the tralier was definitely the way Snake appeared.I wanted the good old Snake, not an old man that looks like the ugly brother of Adolf Hitler.

I hope you guys can at least convince Kojima to turn Snake into what he used to be and reassure me PS3 is gonna be great. Surely I can't be the only fan that feels this way?

The True Snake, via email

Well, firstly, we think you're wrong. We're really looking forward to OAP Snake, and are eagerly anticipating changing his colostomy bag and tucking into Werther's Originals in the post office queue. Secondly, Koj is probably not that keen on the idea of scrapping years of work just because a handful of people are peeved that Snake didn't keep slapping on the Oil of Ulay. *MGS4* will be great. Trust us. Time for some controversy...

XBOX FACTOR

► **Dear PSM2,**

I read your article on how Xbox 360 will get its ass kicked by PS3. I was really offended by it because I don't support game consoles, I support games. I like games if they are good, no matter console they appear on

Suneil Barkat, via email

► **Dear PSM2,**

Your PS3 Power Slam article really wound me up with its schoolboy arguments regarding the apparent inferiority of Xbox 360. PS3 might be a great console, but given the fact that you haven't even played any games on the thing, don't you think writing off its main rival is a tad premature?

Rob Forrest, email

Hmm. The point of the PS3 Vs 360 piece wasn't to 'write off' the Xbox. We like the 360. But, ultimately, PS3 will be more powerful. After taking as much Microsoft bluster as we could we thought we'd spell out a few home truths. Like PS3 will be the first (and possibly only) place you'll play the new *GTA* and *Metal Gear*. This doesn't mean we wish death on 360. Not at all. Revolution, however... [note: this a joke]

MIND THE CAP

► **Dear PSM2**

Can you send me two *Fatal Fury* caps please? I know this seems really cheeky, but my fiancée says she wants one too and she might be about to be laid off, so it would cheer her up.

Ian Cliffe, Ely

Aw. We did have a 'one hat per person' rule, but if it helps smooth the passage of love... One condition, though – we want to see a photo of you both wearing said headgear. Preferably while walking down the isle. 11 hats left – they're getting as rare as hen's molars now. Who'll grab the precious final few? Who? *Who?*

PHONE PSM2 WITH: PS3 OR XBOX – WHADDYA THINK? SNAKE – YOUTH OR EXPERIENCE? IMPROVISED RAP SONGS

BOG BROTHER

► **Dear PSM2**

Like nearly everyone, I've been obsessed by Big Brother. So as I was playing *Sims 2* on my PSP, I thought that it would be a good idea if there was a game version of the show. You could go on to achieve certain tasks, like annoying one of your housemates or cooking dinner, and you should be able to nominate and stuff. Plus, if you were nominated you would have to do entertaining things to stay in.

Sonny Gibson, email

After the first BB there was a *Big Brother* game on PC. It was worse than sharing a bed with George Galloway. Not that we know.

CLASH OF THE TITANS: Will PlayStation 3 be better than Xbox 360? Let's face it, yes.

James Hughes, Blackpool
Only crispy.

JUST DESPERATE
Desperate Housewives. Yesss! Jesse Totty, Wednesbury
Noooo. You have a great name. Though not as good as this...

E=MC HAMMER
Could you send me some magazines for my school project? Einstein Baah Ntim, Croydon
Wouldn't have thought so. If you were THE Einstein, you'd be smart enough to know that already.

JERKS OF THE JOB
Are real guys too much jerks to bother with?
David Russell, email
We prefer jerk chicken.

TWENTY QUESTIONS
What decent game can I get for under twenty quid?
Lucien Parke, email
Domino Rally?

GEOGRAPHY LESSON
I'm going to York tomorrow. That's sorta near Bath, right?
Richard Jenkin, email
Yes, they're 'really close'. Do pop round for a cup of robot-brewed filth from our coffee machine.

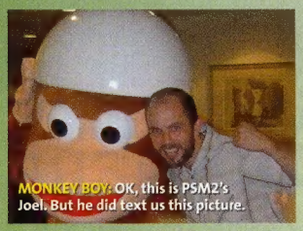
A LONG STRETCH
Stretched out of all proportion by Nathan. Joe, email
Ah, comedy out-of-context quotes. We never tire of them.

Ur txts

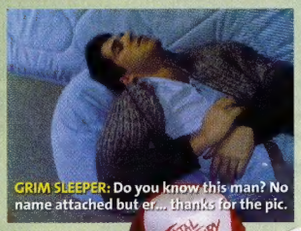
YOU SEND US A TEXT. WE PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND AND OCCASIONALLY REPLY.

YOUR PICTURES

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



MONKEY BOY: OK, this is PSM2's Joel. But he did text us this picture.



GRIM SLEEPER: Do you know this man? No name attached but er... thanks for the pic.

DROP IT LIKE IT'S HAT

A Terry Bogard hat is on its way to the following readers... Alex Adams, Unknown (Kirby Cane Walk), R Laurie, Rebekah Curran, Kieran Monks, and 20 normal (non-textual) letter writers. And would readers who forgot to send their address have a think?

BOGARD COUNTER

014

INCOMING

At last – your texts! And what a selection of non-mental, grammatically-accurate missives they aren't. Keep 'em coming.

PSM2 Is Sony going 2 make a TV tuner 4 the PSP like Sega had 4 the Gamegear many moons ago?
Sony mentioned such a device in 2002, but despite excitable internet rumours, there's been nothing official since. For the moment at least, it looks unlikely. Sorry about that.

PSM2 Got A PSP For XMas, Metal Gear, GTA And Dynasty Warriors. You Guys Seem To Give The PSP A Negative View... Now Im Worried, Is The PSP Worth It At The End Of The Day?
What do you think? It's up to you, really.

PSM2 I was wondering as I like 2 surf the net on my PSP will there ever be a media player available just like windows media?. phil VICKERS Manchester
In a word, no. At the moment, the best you can do is save .jpg files, but PSP'S net abilities are expanding all the time.

PSM2 Can I have a hat? I dont know who terry bogard is but I thought Id help you guys out
He's the bloke who wears the hat.

PSM2 Is alien hominid full of bugs or is it just my copy? The screen keeps freezing! Cheers. Chris.
They're aliens, Chris. *Aliens*.

PSM2 I thnk u must of upset laura thats why she dnt write wot about her idea? Just replace that chat n date crap wots it got 2 do wit playstation. Shann Daniels
Er... next on the left, opposite Dixons.

PSM2 Hi, I buy PSM2 every month but I have a lil question. why cant I save psone games on ps2? I wanted to revisit mgs1 but cant! Help! Nikki, bath
It's a weird Sony thing, but you *can* save it on an original PSone Memory Card via your PS2, just not on a *PS2* memory card. Brilliant, eh?

PSM2 Stop the shameful pOrn ads creeping 4ward again! FPS \"Urban Chaos\"-surely a name conflict with PS1 3rd-personer?
It's also an Eidos game, and they can do what they like with the name, however confusing it may get.

PSM2 hi I own a psp but the memory stick ive got is rubbish! So I was just wonderin were the cheapest place is 2 buy a 1gb memory stick,plz help thx!
To save money, don't buy an official memory stick – head online to a shopping comparison site like kelkoo.co.uk and search for a 'Sandisk'. We can't guarantee the results though, sorry.

PSM2 hey guys plz can u tell me how to burn dvd to pc then compress the file then convert for psp thx
It's too long to print here, but see PSM2#59 or PSM2#71.

PSM2 Why has Total Overdose got such a high score? Its pure an utter pish.There\'s glitches galore n don\'t get me started on the cars when u hit sumthing. Irritating!
An-*dy!*

psm2 plz tru dat u pla ur ps2 on a big telly eg -wide screen it damages ur ps2 sumthin 2du wid da picha?
Third on the right, big sign. Can't miss it.

Psm2 Where b robomind? I am shocked and offended. ron kutaragi is ok but da robo-miestar was better
"Simpering Meatball! My column is fully operational. The cheques just haven't cleared ye...01100 error... DAMN YOU DOUBLE-CROSSING SKIN FLUMPS! ROBO-MIND WILL BURN YOU ALL! 10 EXECUTE 'RAISE ROOM TEMPERATURE TO 26° BETWEEN 00.00 and 01.30! Etc."

PSM2 I have 2 agree that laura dm does sound like a real hottie. Yet again it could be a very lonely person just wantin simpathy. Chris \"Big Daddy\"Louch
Decisions, eh? But we all like sympathy.

HOT TOPICS

A 'highly-scientific' scale reflecting all your concerns over the last few weeks. Keep on texting, people.

COLD

- I've got this brilliant idea for a game...
- What GCSEs do I need to work on PSM2?
- When is PS3 coming out?
- Terry Bogard hats

HOT

Hats off to ya: We can only assume from this month's hot texts that you'd all like PS3 to come out with a special 'hat' interface that makes every game character wear caps. Sounds like heaven.

HOW 2 TEXT PSM2

Yes! Now you can text your questions and letters to PSM2. No more fiddling with 'paper' and 'pens'. When you want answers, our mobile portal is wide open and waiting. Here's how you do it.

DO THIS NOW! WE'RE WAITING!

It really couldn't be simpler. In the words of Salt 'N" Pepa 'Let's talk about text'... Or something. We've set up not one, but three different lines upon which to reach us. Look. Down there.

TEXT THE TEAM!

First up we want you to ask us a question. Anything! We'll feature your questions and answers in the mag and – we swear by almighty Lorne Lanning himself – that we'll do our best to text you back a reply as soon as poss. The best bit? You only pay for the text once we reply. (Answers to your PlayStation questions will cost you 25p plus your normal TXTing charge).
Start your text PSM2 then a space, then your question. Text the lot to 87103. We'll reply. Honest!

MAKE US LAUGH!

Taken a photo of anything decent recently? Fancy sharing it with the readership of PSM2? We want to see your pictures. Best picture each month wins a booty of games. Pics cost 50p, plus your usual TXTing charge. Just try and keep them vaguely game related eh? No violence or porn thanks. Second thoughts... if you have any hot certified-over-18 female friends or relations that we can hook Andy up with... Or men, come to think of it.
Start your text PSM2PICS then a space, then your message. Enclose you pic and text the lot to 07921 889345. Best pic wins.

VOTE FOR GAMES!

What games do you want to see in PSM2? Which are you most looking forward to? Text us and we'll compile your Most Wanted chart each month. What's more, one entry each month will win the game they vote for. Texts cost 25p plus your usual TXTing charge.
Start your text PSM2VOTE then a space, then the name of the game you want to 87103. Be lucky!

YOUR PLAYSTATION 3 QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

WITH RON KUTARAGI
(the less famous, younger brother of President and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, Ken Kutaragi).

PC GONE MAD

Dear PSM2,
Could you tell me how much PS3 games will actually cost? I also heard rumours that PS3 will be able to play PC games. Can you shed any light for me?
James Bell, Leeds
"Sadly, games are likely to cost about 50 quid, what with the extra cost of making Blu-ray discs. Oh, and Ken's insatiable greed for money. But I didn't say that bit. But it'll be worth it. PC compatability? I asked Ken about that. He smacked me round the head and told me not to ask stupid questions. I think that's your answer right there. It's no wonder I'm not as smart as him if he keeps hitting me round the head. Hey, I like your style do you want to come round and watch Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles this afternoon? Ken's out so we can listen to his Enya CDs and play with his PlayStation."

MEMORY LOSS

Dear PSM2,
The PS3 controllers are huge, and it's come to my attention that they'll be wireless. Will people just let the huge controllers pass or will Sony lose money? And will there also be normal controller ports for people who feel uncomfortable using wireless pads?
Andrew Dore, email
"Heroes in a half-shell – turtle power! Sorry? What? Joypads? Ken is in his bedroom redesigning the PS3 pad right now. I don't know what he's come up with, because he doesn't let me in his room. Not since I mistook his last design for a banana. Still there was no need to cut the ears off my teddies. He did once mention something about the pads being wireless-only. He didn't say it to me, he was trying to impress that girl from over the road. I don't like her. She flashes her boobies if you give her 50p. And Ken's so much richer than me."

RELEASE ME

Dear PSM2,
Have Sony taken some kind of idiot pill? £400 for a machine and up to 60 quid a game is quite simply too much, no matter how good the product. I struggle to pay £35-£40 for a decent PS2 game as it is. And no backward compatibility with PS2 memory cards? Isn't that just the dumbest move ever?
James McLean, Glasgow
"Ken was so angry at your letter. He ordered me not to print it "on pain of pain" and muttered something about "development costs hiking prices up". Fact is Sony know they're onto a good thing and they'll sell just as many PS3s at £400 a pop as they will at £300. Ken's a smart guy and, like he always says, Ferraris and yachts don't just buy themselves you know. *Silly* James."

LOOP THE LOOP

Dear Ron,
People asked for Robo-Mind to go, and now he has, no-one's noticed. I like his replacement, though, even though Ron's a bit loopy.
Matthew Andrews, email
"Sniff... James didn't want to watch Turtles! I'm glad *you* like me, though, Matthew... no-one else does... BWAAAAH! Except Ken, he likes me, even though he pretends not to. I'm off to go and get more amazing PlayStation 3 facts for next month. As soon as Ken has finished eating all that gold."

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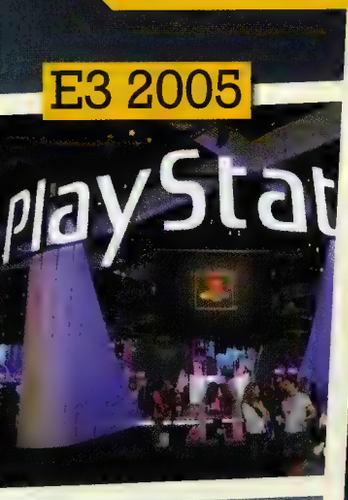
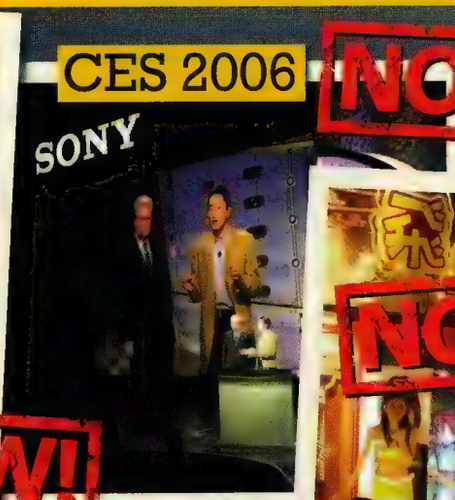
Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP, INSIDER DIRT, ZERO BULLSHIT





PLAYSTATION 3: MARCH 2007?!

Bad news. PlayStation 3 could be further away than you think.

As we go to press, the solidifying notion in the games world is that PS3 might not hit UK shops until March 2007. With the machine yet to show its face in any form and the only confirmed information being that released back at the E3 show in May 2005, it's an opinion that's looking increasingly probable. The good news is that, without Sony's confirmation, this is still strictly just the opinion of one man – Evan Wilson, a market analyst for Pacific Crest Securities

Wilson's job is to predict major movements in the technology industry so that millions of dollars of investment money can be shifted to the right place at the right time in order to benefit from other people's good fortunes. But the rest of the world's investment banks seem to be following suit, with the 'March 2007 for Europe' story quickly becoming an established fact, backed up by a supposed Sony leak unfortunately confirming the 2007 launch to some of the key developers.

What do Sony say to us? They're still sticking to a "Spring 2006" global launch claim that, if we're honest, we didn't believe back when they wheeled it out at E3 in May 2005. The predicted launch calendar now reads 'Summer' 2006 for Japan, October 2006 for the US and – yup – March 2007 for Europe. And to think at one stage there was even a glimmer that Europe might get PlayStation 3 first...

It's worth bearing in mind that Sony are confirming none of this, but the fact that they are yet to officially deny such a damaging story has to lend it even greater credence, unfortunately.

The new dates come on the back of a series of disappointing no-shows for PlayStation 3. First came the Tokyo Game Show in September 2006 (which ended up being a re-run of the E3 show in May), next came the Consumer Electronics show in January 2007 (with even less PS3 being shown there) and the latest nail in the release date coffin, the Taipei Game Show where – despite ambitious promises from the show's organizers – Sony once again wheeled out the self-same empty PS3 cases and video from almost a year earlier.

"TO THINK AT ONE STAGE THERE WAS AN IDEA EUROPE MIGHT EVEN GET PS3 FIRST"

Price-wise it's not good news either. Another investment firm, Meryl Lynch, recently calculated the cost of PS3's components and got a figure of $900 (in their opinion) for each and every unit. That's £517. It has always been said that Sony will take a loss per unit, but a deficit of £117 in order to secure that 'hoped for' £400 price tag? That's unlikely. Best start getting used to the idea of forking out £450 too... Ouch.

But despite zero (official) movement from Sony themselves, there are the first signs of games and developers breaking ranks, eager to show what the new machine will be capable of. Last issue we brought you the first incredible *Sonic* shots and with each passing month we've been able to unearth an increasingly strong selection of new pics and facts. In fact, after PSM2 meetings with two of the world's biggest software publishers, we can confirm (without being arrested or sued) that there's an unbelievable line-up of new games on the way for PlayStation 3. Keep it PSM2 for more.

PSM2 RECKONS *Sony are yet to come clean but it currently looks like the impossible is going to happen and Microsoft are going to have another Christmas all to themselves. And while PlayStation 3 was always going to be expensive, it's going to be more costly than we could ever have anticipated. But the games look amazing and, when it arrives, no-one doubts its ability to rule. Still, 2007, eh? Two thousand and frikkin' seven! Bwah!...*

* Storage media (HDD, "Memory Stick", SD memory card, and CompactFlash) are sold separately.
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* "Memory Stick" and "Memory Stick PRO" are trademarks of Sony Corporation.

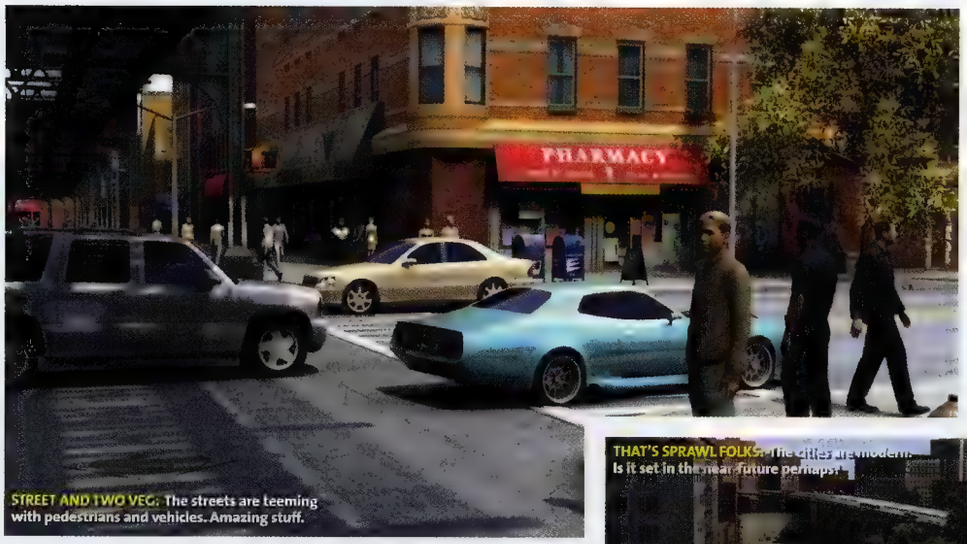
GOOD NEWS! SORT OF. LOOK!

At least the machine itself keeps getting better and better...

Latest rumours state that PS3 will have the ability to record digital TV, replacing your Sky+ or DVR box. However we're unclear as to how, with the machine lacking any kind of video 'in' socket. That may change with the finished machine, however – remember the E3 casing was just a prototype. Sony changed the PSP design between first showing and final roll out, so may with PS3. The big question is: what will it record too? Sony had described the PS3's hard drive as 'detachable' which at least offered the glimmer that the machine may include some kind of hard drive in the pack. But on www.playstation.com, Sony's new PS3 page describes the HDD as 'optional'. Ah... More money...

PS3 – NEW GAMES! NEW SHOTS!

OK, it's ages until PS3, but console yourself these shots of amazing new titles.



STREET AND TWO VEG: The streets are teeming with pedestrians and vehicles. Amazing stuff.

"LOOK AT THOSE GRAPHICS. IS PS3 CAPABLE OF THIS?"

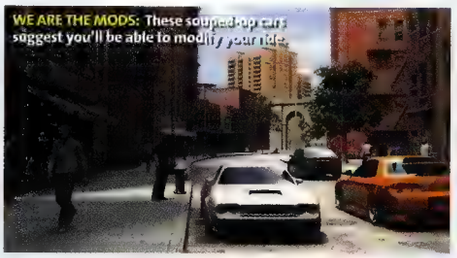
2 DAYS TO VEGAS

This third-person crime-'em-up promises to push PS3's world-building to its limits.

Fresh from a three-year stretch in the joint, *2 Days To Vegas* lead character Vinnie has no intention of reforming. But it isn't his fault – his idiot brother Tony is in trouble with some gangsters and it's up to Vinnie to bail him out. How? By shooting, driving and murderizing his way across a number of American cities. And the catch? He only has 48 hours to do it. But forget about all that – look at those graphics. Okay, so these may be slightly enthusiastic renders, but it's in no way outlandish to assume that PS3 is capable of visuals like this. Gameplay details are thin on the ground, but we do know that it'll be a third-person shooter/driver along the lines of *GTA*.

PSM RECKONS *This looks technically amazing, but can developers Steel Monkeys make good on their promises? Then there's the issue of the actual game – will it match up to the hyper-realistic visuals? Whatever the case, we won't be seeing this for a good long while.*

THAT'S SPRAWL FOLKS: The cities are modern. Is it set in the near-future perhaps?



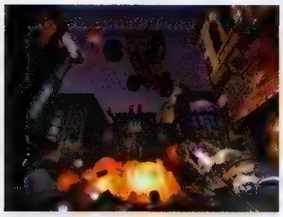
WE ARE THE MODS: These souped-up cars suggest you'll be able to modify your ride.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2007

Classic PC shooter (turned PS3 tech demo) comes back for revenge with some of the best graphics we've ever seen.

The Unreal 3 engine is one of the most desirable in the world. Among the companies who've licensed the technology for their next-gen output are Atari, Sony, Vivendi and smaller developers including Gearbox and Silicon Knights. Everyone wants a slice of the pie, and it's no surprise considering how absolutely stunning it looks. If you saw Sony's PS3 demo at E3 last year, you'll have seen a short demo of a man fighting a robot – this was running on the Unreal 3 engine. *Unreal Tournament 2007* itself is a deathmatch-focused FPS that gives you free reign of a vast interactive battlefield. You can drive tanks, fly around in futuristic jet things or tackle the enemy on foot. This is the ideal game to kickstart the online side of PS3.

PSM RECKONS *If the last few* Unreal Tournament *games are anything to go by, this should be just as groundbreaking gameplay-wise as it is visually. The developers are combining elements of single-player first-person shooters with the online multi-player, so expect to be completing mission objectives as well as feverishly trying to defend your flag in a CTF match.*



DRIVE TIME: You can take control of loads of vehicles including these impressive hover tank things.

STRANGLEHOLD

Director John Woo to helm action-packed PS3 launch title.

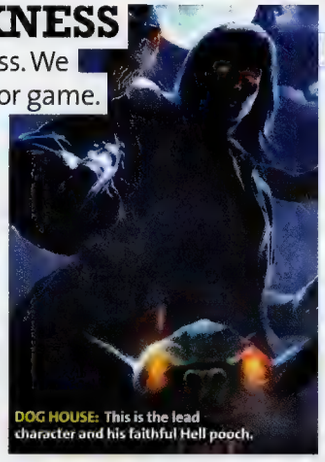
Reprising the lead role from the classic Woo flick Hard Boiled, legendary Chinese actor Chow Yun-Fat is set to star in this action game from Midway. As we speak, PSM2 deputy editor Dan D is in Los Angeles viewing the game, so expect more details than you can handle next issue. For now though, admire these screenshots; the Yun-Fat likeness is spot-on. Expect lots of spinning around with dual-pistols and amazing slow-mo martial arts. We can't wait.

WOO KNEW IT: Fingers crossed that this E3 2005 pic turns out to be an in-game shot.

THE DARKNESS

No, not that Darkness. We mean this new horror game.

From the creators of the brilliant *Chronicles Of Riddick* comes this crime/horror hybrid that sees you playing as a mafioso with the ability to transform into a snarling monster. No, it doesn't make any sense, but we like the idea of running across rooftops, howling at the moon and tearing innocent bystanders apart with our razor-sharp claws. Starbreeze, the developers, are a talented bunch and the idea could be good, despite being far-out.



DOG HOUSE: This is the lead character and his faithful Hell pooch.

REDWOOD FALLS

The latest on this mysterious new FPS from developer Kuju.

Kuju are keeping this one quiet, but they showed a demo of the game to a very small audience in Japan under a strict understanding that no images could be released – yet. The demo showed a man being shot, literally, to pieces in gruesome, grisly detail. You saw bone and innards fly around and saw him ripped to shreds in real-time. Sounds gruesome, but apparently the theme of the game is 'regenration', whatever that means. We'll run shots shortly.

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

Hands-on with the most hands-on assassin in video games. Get some more fibre (wire) in your diet.

After spending a few hours with near-finished code of *Hitman: Blood Money*, there's one thing that becomes very clear. Those of you who played the previous *Hitman* games with a fully automatic attitude, blasting to death everything in your way, are going to have a very tough time with *Blood Money*. People are *everywhere*: tourists, security guards, bodyguards, bystanders, nurses, gangsters, opera singers, rehab patients. There are dozens of them scattered throughout each level, giving you plenty more opportunity to craft the perfect kill, but ever more chance of getting caught, rumbled and taken down.

So those who butcher everything in their path until the right guy/gal stumbles into the crosshair are going to be flummoxed. The moment you cause even the slightest bit of chaos, gun-toting peacekeepers appear from all angles, cutting Agent 47 down within seconds.

That bustle isn't too clear from the opening stage, a training level set in a deserted fairground, but the improvement in visual quality obvious. Amusingly, we first noticed it thanks to 47's slaphead, as some hazy light bounced off it in a manner that puts *Blood Money* ahead of *Contracts* in terms of looks. The same goes for the environments, as there's far more going on than just the glinting of a baldy noggin.

We've only properly experienced two stages so far – the opera house and the rehab centre – but they were intricate with possibilities in which to pull off the perfect hit and earn the best rankings (and profits) with both of them genuinely feeling like classics-in-waiting. Be sure to pop back for our in-depth review next issue.

UPGRADE YOUR MOBILE: There are fewer guns this time, but each is customisable. And deadly. Very deadly,.

> **"IT'S INTRICATE WITH POSSIBILITIES IN WHICH TO PULL OFF THE PERFECT KILL"**

PSM REKONS *The delays look like they've been worth it, resulting in stages that are rich with fiendish opportunities and memorable set-pieces, not to mention crowds of people that give rise to as many problems as solutions. It's on track to be a killer app, in every sense.*

DIRTY DOZEN: See? That's a whole damn crowd of coppers. Er... Chef's outfit? Postman?... Table lamp?...

MISSION POSITION: Some missions will offer bonus objectives on the fly for extra cash.

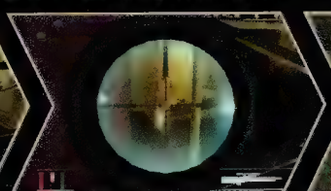
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

A look at all the bloodshed and mayhem you'll cause in two of *Hitman: Blood Money*'s earlier stages.

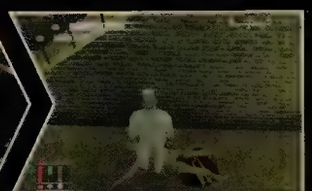
MISSION 3 THE OPERA HOUSE

This place is choc-a-bloc with groups of tourists and nervy security types.

There are four floors, with the top three focused on the stage itself...



... where one of your targets is rehearsing his lines. Your other's in a stall up on high.



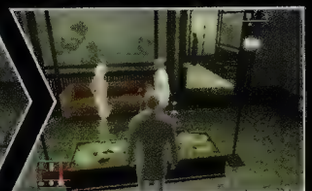
The bottom floor is where the maintenance crew hang out. Time for a costume change...

MISSION 4 THE REHAB CLINIC

The clinic has large grounds, patrolled by guards and 'clients' in bath robes...

... such as this guy. This nutter's begging to have his dressing gown stolen.

Once you've knocked him out, stuff him into the bin. The perfect crime.



Now you've got to rescue someone, as well as pulling off a handful of precision murders.

TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

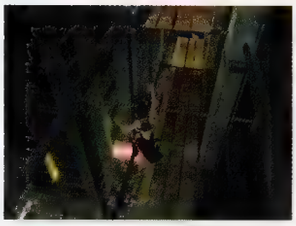
We're playing it! Here's what Dan G and Dan D think.

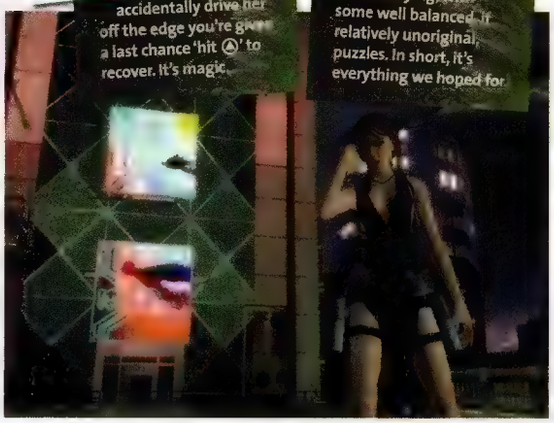
UPDATE

GLASS ACT: The secret to Lara's new believability are her glassy, reflective eyes. They look real. We think we're in love.

DAN G SAYS: First thing I tried? To get up a cliff face as quickly as possible. After spending half an hour climbing onto a skip in the last game I wanted to test how intuitive new Lara really was. Results? She looks at the next hand hold, a simple twang of the stick has her leaping from ledge to ledge and should you accidentally drive her off the edge you're given a last chance 'hit Ⓐ' to recover. It's magic.

DAN D SAYS: Acid test? A flick of the right analog stick. The camera zooms in, and Lara looks *gorgeous* – from her delicate features, to the pistol detail. Scenery is equally impressive, with huge vistas and rugged architecture. Aside from some slight alignment issues, movement is fluid and satisfying, with some well balanced if relatively unoriginal, puzzles. In short, it's everything we hoped for.





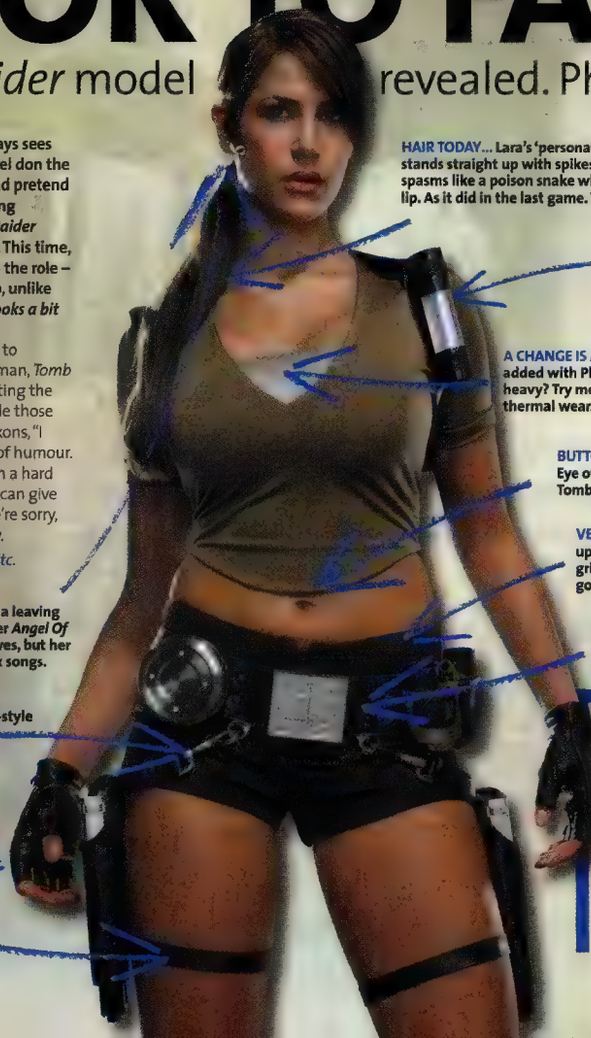
MEET THE LARA CROFT IT'S OK TO FANCY

New *Tomb Raider* model revealed. Phew-ee. Etc.

A new *Tomb Raider* always sees some glamorous model don the shorts and holsters and pretend to be Lara for marketing purposes. And *Tomb Raider Legend* is no different. This time, Eidos have London's Karima Adebibe in the role – and for once they've got someone who, unlike Neil McAndrew for instance, *actually looks a bit like Lara*. Wonders will never cease.

"Karima has all the assets needed to accurately portray Lara," said Matt Gorman, *Tomb Raider* Brand Controller, doubtless resisting the temptation to add, "And I'd like to handle those assets myself!" Meanwhile, Karima reckons, "I liken myself to Lara with my dry sense of humour. I think we also both like to give our men a hard time." A 'hard' time, eh? Woarrgh! She can give us a hard time any day! Woof woof! We're sorry, we haven't been outside much recently.

PSM RECKONS *Phwooooaaarrrrr! Etc.*



HAIR TODAY... Lara's 'personal hair source' no longer stands straight up with spikes coming out of it or spasms like a poison snake who's just bitten his own lip. As it did in the last game. That's progress.

LIGHT FANTASTIC: Lara's 'personal light source,' or indeed 'light', mounted on her 'personal limb motion enablement resource'. Or shoulder.

A CHANGE IS AS GOOD AS A VEST: A vest – seemingly added with Photoshop. Was the original shot too cleavage-heavy? Try mentally subtracting this dodgy bit of virtual thermal wear. Image now – too breasty? No way.

BUTTON UP: Karima's belly button is clearly the Eye of Horus, cleverly referencing the original Tomb Raider's Egyptian locations.

VERY HOT PANTS: Short shorts – still! Not updated, in-vogue baggies. She's not urban or gritty! Look, she's not even practical! It's just good, icon-building gameland style.

MMM, TASTY: Fray Bentos steak 'n' kidney pie tin. Stuffed with corn plasters.

LONG IN THE TOOTH: Bluetooth headset – a leaving gift from the call centre she worked in after *Angel Of Darkness*. She gets terrible reception in caves, but her phone also plays MP3s. She enjoys Rednex songs.

CHROME ON THE RANGE: Rugged chrome-style holster clips – £1 for three in Hypervalue

FINGER-LAND: Fingerless gloves – warmer than sweatbands, harder than mittens.

HOLSTER PILS: Holster straps – look a bit like stockings if you squint.

NOT SHOWN

- Bruises all down body and legs from smashing into rock faces after jumps.
- No fingernails left from grasping grimly at ledges after bruising impacts with rock faces.
- Multi-location plug adaptor.
- Warm tracky bottoms.
- Toilet roll.
- Two suitcases, carry-on luggage and a Dolcis bag full of cardigans.

NEWS BITES

"SNOW JOKE"

MAN "STOKED"

Just days after winning gold at this year's Winter Olympics, "action sports phenomenon" Shaun White has been signed up as the face of Ubisoft's new snowboarding title. The game, previously know as "*[insert medal winner's name here]'s Snowboarding*" will feature straight-up boarding and extreme trick-based gameplay. "I'm stoked!" said White. "I'm a big fan of *Prince Of Persia*". Rumours that Ubisoft employees were spotted at the top of the half-pipe, holding out a pen and contract, waiting for someone to nudge the two together are unfounded. With no *SSX* from EA this year, we're hoping this will prove to be a worthy alternative.

"DRIVE TIME"

CARS SKID ONTO PS2

Milking their Disney/Pixar license, THQ are releasing a game based on the forthcoming animated feature, Cars. Cars is the story of Lightning McQueen, a talking stock car voiced by Zoolander star Owen Wilson. En route to a big race, the cocky McQueen gets waylaid and finds the true meaning of friendship and family. Well, it *is* a Disney film after all. Quite how the game will pan out remains to be seen, but we're placing our bets on a platformer with some racing elements thrown in. If it captures Pixar's trademark sense of humour, there's no reason why this won't be enjoyable. Although *The Incredibles* wasn't exactly great...

"MISSING IN ACTION"

DOUBLE AGENT DELAYED

Bad news – you'll have to wait at least another six months for the new *Splinter Cell*. Why? Well, they'll never admit it, but it's a strategic move by publishers Ubisoft to make sure people buy it over the rest of that month's competitors. You see, over the coming months *Driver: Parallel Lines*, *Hitman: Blood Money* and *Tomb Raider* are all coming out, and let's face it, they'll sell millions. So Ubisoft are holding *Cell* back until towards the end of the year when there's nothing out to contend with. Good idea, but bad news for fans.

HOW TO GET YOUR FREE GAME FOR YOUR MOBILE PHONE!*

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It's a terrific PSM2 giveaway – get your choice of FREE mobile phone game *right in your face!* We're far too good to you lot.

SUDOKU MASTER

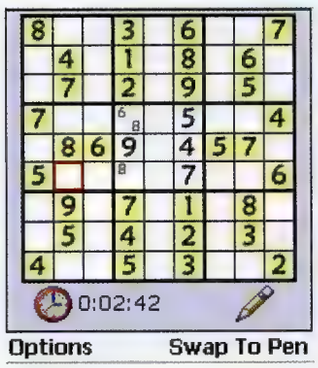
Chances are, if you've seen Carol Vorderman swanning around in recent months, it's been in a Sudoku capacity. It's the craze that's sweeping the nation! Mad 4 Games' version includes 20 boards plus an update option, multiple difficulty levels, unique hint mode, save game facility and a 'pencil' facility for when you're not sure! Use just one thumb to puzzle away the morning journey into work. But do not miss your stop. No.

MAYHEM'S MAGIC DUST

The guys at Infinite Lives have produced a sizzling platform extravaganza that'll make your life look like the boring existence it is. Oh, yeah. You'll love the way that central character Mayhem dishes it out big style to cuddly-looking beasts in this old-skool experience that'll have you shedding rose-tinted tears. This game would be great on a console, let alone on a frikkin' mobile!

SENSIBLE SOCCER

This mobile version of the legendary footy game, developed by Tower Studios and published by Kuju Wireless, features eleven game modes, accurate player performances and, on higher spec handsets, even action replays and bonus animations. The *Sensible Soccer* series already has 15 million users worldwide – and play this astonishing mobile phone version and you'll find out why. If you're a football fan, this is going to be heaven.



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■ Developer: Radical Entertainment ■ Publisher: VU Games ■ ETA: October

SCARF' THIS LOT DOWN

Scarface – better than *Godfather*?

There's only so much room in videogameville for gangsters, it would seem, which would explain why so many of them end up stepping on *GTA*'s toes. Still, we have reason for faith in *Scarface: The World Is Yours*. *Hit 'n Run*, so they've got good experience in creating free-roaming worlds. Whatever voodoo Radical can perform to turn a three-hour movie into a 40-hour game, *Scarface* will be one of the last big-name games to arrive on PS2, towards the end of the year. Don't forget about it, y'hear, or he'll be back. Oops – wrong movie.

"SCARFACE DELIVERS A TRULY VIOLENT VISION OF THE '80S"

Despite its Bond-like subtitle, these latest shots show an improved engine that could make it the game that *Driver: Parallel Lines* couldn't quite manage to be. Also, it's being made by Radical Entertainment, the studio responsible for *Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* and *Simpsons: Hit 'n Run*.

PSM RECKONS *Forget Vice City – Scarface is looking to deliver a truly violent vision of the '80s. And if these new shots don't impress, you can rest easy knowing that there are still a few months of development remaining. Trust us. We always tell the truth, even when we lie.*

IT'LL BE ALL WHITE ON THE NIGHT: "Saturday night fever? Wrong decade, mate."

'Shar-on, say hello to myyy leetle friend... SHARON! ...y'what? Gangster? Well, I never...' ' Er, this is John Culshaw. From Dead Ringers.

AL PACI-NO

Al Pacino isn't all Pacino, by the way. While the shouty actor has contributed his facial likeness to the game, he's not offering his voice. But there will be plenty of movie-faithful voice acting in the game, though, so don't expect the whole thing to sound like an episode of Dead Ringers.

REACH FOR THE SKY: We hope you'll be able to clear out everyone in that huge skyscraper.

PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD: There'll be buddies in these huts.

NO CHANGE: 2013 doesn't appear to look much different to 2006, does it?

TOMORROW'S WORLD

Ghost Recon's back! Oh, show enthusiasm...

It's in the future, see, that's why it's *Advanced*. Set in 2013, *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter*'s located in Mexico City, which explains the dust-coated environments and the intense sunshine. With the city having been overrun by terrorists, it's up to you and your squad of military cyborgs to flush them out like so many diseased rats. Well, you're not really cyborgs, but you do have an amazing amount of technology to hand, with each of your troops packing more gadgets than you'd find under James Bond's Christmas tree.

We hope that Ubisoft have reigned the game in somewhat from the too-simple approach of *Ghost Recon 2*, and provides an experience as tight and demanding as the original. But with the game featuring a song from Evanescence – a move which brings up images of Green Day's awful war-rock ballad 'Wake Me Up When September Ends' – we don't feel that challenging simulation is top of the list of priorities. Still, if it's slick and enjoyable and the guns are fun to shoot, what price a little soft angst-o-rock?

PSM RECKONS *Advanced Warfighter* has plenty of cool tech to offer, in terms of both equipment and looks, but can Ubi bring it all together in an engaging way? We wouldn't have such doubts, but *Ghost Recon 2* was lacking. *GR: AW* is looking promising, though.

SPECTRE GADGETS

Advanced Warfighter puts you in charge of a four-man squad, each of whom is coated in the latest (theoretical) US military 'awesomeness'. Whether you play in first or third-person, the screen is busy with satellite communications in the form of mission updates and info, and even the odd news broadcast, plus you'll be able to command air strikes and allied insertions thanks to the eyepieces on the hi-tech uniforms. And, if that's not help enough, threat identification systems will keep track of the enemies you can see, while remote-controlled airborne drones can spy on those you can't.

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Han! Leia! Luke! The Lego empire strikes back...

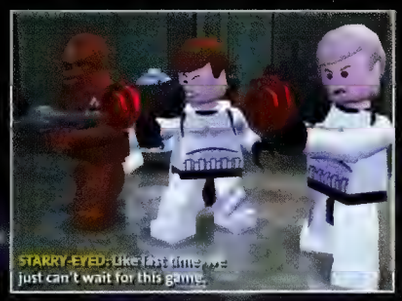
So... it's a sequel to a game based on the prequels of a movie series whose sequels came before its prequels. OK. All you need to know is this: *Lego Star Wars* was kinda ace. It was hugely appealing, if too much of a pushover, but was an entertaining and colourful uses of a license. Two licenses, even.

So, before anything else, *Lego Star Wars II* will offer a challenging advanced mode, to shush those who found the original too easy. With its story and stages focusing on the *good* Star Wars trilogy, and not the awful new trio of dumbass CGI super-rubbish, every major, much-loved set-piece should be available for you to play through.

The original *LSW* offered vehicles at fixed moments in standalone levels – the Episode One Pod race, for example – but the sequel will allow you to 'Free Play' with them, along with a bunch of creatures that can be ridden, and take them into whatever level you choose. Only up to a point, though: it's unlikely you'll be able to ride a Bantha into the Trench Run sequence.

The most attractive new offering, though, has to be the custom character option; many games offer such a thing, but it's rarely exciting. Here, though, you can take an existing *LSW* figure, then fiddle with their appearance until you've got your very own Jabba the Skywalker. Try connecting *that*, Star Wars obsessives.

Also – think you've seen the last of Jar Jar Binks? Don't be so sure. If you played the original *Lego Star Wars*, you'll be able to use your memory card save file to unlock up to 56 bonus characters in *LSWII* (pushing the total available to over 100), one of which will most likely be everyone's least favourite ethnic goofball. Oh... *dammit*.



STARRY-EYED: Like last time, we just can't wait for this game.

PSM RECKONS *LucasArts has a sure-fire hit on its hands, and not because the game's based on the biggest ever movie licence. Nope, it's because Lego Star Wars II seems to be offering some decent progression over the charming original, a game that wouldn't have sold as many copies if not for the fact that so many people enjoyed it. Bespin Luke? Hoth Han? Yes, please.*

DARTH VADER

Potential abilities? Light sabre use, choking minions, going 'hgggh' down the phone. *Cuteness?* Not even Vader's evil can withstand Legoification. *Hairpiece?* Probably all burnt off, and covered in melty skin.

LUKE SKYWALKER

Potential abilities? Light sabre mastery, X-wing piloting, Force pushing. *Cuteness?* Anguished but handsome, even if it looks like he has a Hitler 'tache. *Hairpiece?* Doesn't quite cover his head, sadly.

C3PO

Potential abilities? We'd like to see him knock stuff over, accidentally. *Cuteness?* Just looks like a fat C3PO, really. *Hairpiece?* Not just bald, but *gold* bald. How bling.

CHEWBACCA

Potential abilities? Bowcasting, thumping people, going 'grargh' at bad jokes. *Cuteness?* Still quite imposing, even when he's so dinky. *Hairpiece?* Unknown, since it has no beginning, nor end.

HAN SOLO

Potential abilities? Shooting blasters, piloting vehicles, looking damn-ass cool-ass. *Cuteness?* Boxy chest aside, they've got that white collar just right. *Hairpiece?* Looks a bit like nice chocolate.

PRINCESS LEIA

Potential abilities? Shooting guns, strangling fat aliens, holding on to ropes. *Cuteness?* A saucy pose here, but that chest cavity is worrying. *Hairpiece?* Nice buns, but rather too much like a moulded dog poo.

R2-D2

Potential abilities? Hovering, opening doors, going 'blllp pzzzt weep'. *Cuteness?* Identical to his ultra-cute movie self. *Hairpiece?* N/A.

Accelerator extra

Tiny last-minute shots of BIG importance

BURNOUT OUT OR NOT OUT?

When will the next *Burnout* appear? Despite promises the series will not become a yearly cash cow work is already thought to be under way on the next instalment. This will be the first ground-up next-gen *Burnout*, of course, but we'd still hate to see it devalued by quickfire rehashes.

TONY HAWK'S HEADS DOWNHILL

Perhaps the most dreaded words in gaming have been applied to the *Tony Hawk's Underground* series. Yes, the next one's 'for kids'. Normally this means 'lazy and creatively bankrupt, but this time it won't. *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam* sounds 'brilliant'. Cough.

YUKES' NEXT GAME: IT'S A DOG

Creators of the *SmackDown!* series, Yukes, next game involves... puppies. *The Dog: Happy Life* is a simulation that involves raising, breeding and training wickle doggies to suplex each other. Maybe not that. Dog games – the next big thing. Maybe.

MOVIES: CANNED

Lionhead's critically acclaimed film sim, *The Movies*, has hit the cutting room floor permanently – you won't be seeing it on PS2. Despite reviewing well, the game has sold well below expectations and Activision just doesn't think it's worth it. Shame.

MARVEL RPG

Activision has finally put a name to its Marvel RPG – *Marvel Legends*. Obviously this reflects the 'ensemble' cast of superheroes that include Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four and the X-Men, rather than the other equillion games with a 'Legend' suffix.

Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP, INSIDER DIRT, ZERO BULLSHIT

CRYSIS: ON PS3 AND SOBBING GORGEOUS!

The 'spiritual' sequel to *Far Cry* is looking truly next gen.

GUN IN THE SUN: The real-time lighting is amazingly realistic.

Crytek, creators of the much-loved tropical shooter *Far Cry*, are bringing their hugely impressive island-creating technology to 'next generation consoles' – of which PS3 is the foremost, of course. So can we expect *Far Cry 2* on PS3? No.

German dev team Crytek long ago split with publisher Ubisoft, leaving the *Far Cry* rights behind but taking both their CryEngine technology and obsession with the word 'cry.' Their next game, the first to use the very advanced CryEngine 2 – and published by EA – is brand new. It's called *Crysis*.

The Pacific island in *Crysis* is huge, vastly bigger than *Far Cry*'s and yet unbroken by loading pauses – it loads constantly, and [illegible] to HALO jump from thousands of feet to the ground before moving seamlessly into the FPS action. And it's *Crysis*'s world that's the real star.

You're on the island because something has fallen to earth there and it's not a meteor, a moonbeam or David Bowie. And there's only a few of you – you have six AI mates – because the North Koreans got there in force first. A large, obvious US assault force would only start an all-out war.

Of course, that 'something' from the sky turns out to be alien. You have boats, jeeps, choppers and even a VTOL jet to travel around in, though staying low-key will pay off – use your Nano Muscle Suit in its stealth setting, and maybe wait for dusk? Shadows won't help against the aliens, though, they see in infra-red. Handily, your suit can match its temperature to the surroundings.

Amazingly, the characters track your behaviour, so the Korean general knows if you've gone Rambo with his troops and will be unwilling to help when you later team up against the aliens. Similarly, the lady on your squad likes a certain type of man, and will fall for you if you play your armour penetrating explosive-tipped cards right and embody just her type of militaristic badboy psycho alien killer grunt.

As you near the crashed ship you find and scan debris from it. Even before this you can upgrade your weaponry with sights, laser targets and silencers, while later on you can steal existing alien gadgets like the circle-firing Molecular Accelerator.

PSM RECKONS: *This ought to be amazing. More news as and when we get it!*

DECK IT OUT: This aircraft carrier is absurdly detailed. Amazing, eh?

"THE CHARACTERS TRACK YOUR BEHAVIOUR THROUGHOUT"

A NEW DAWN A NEW

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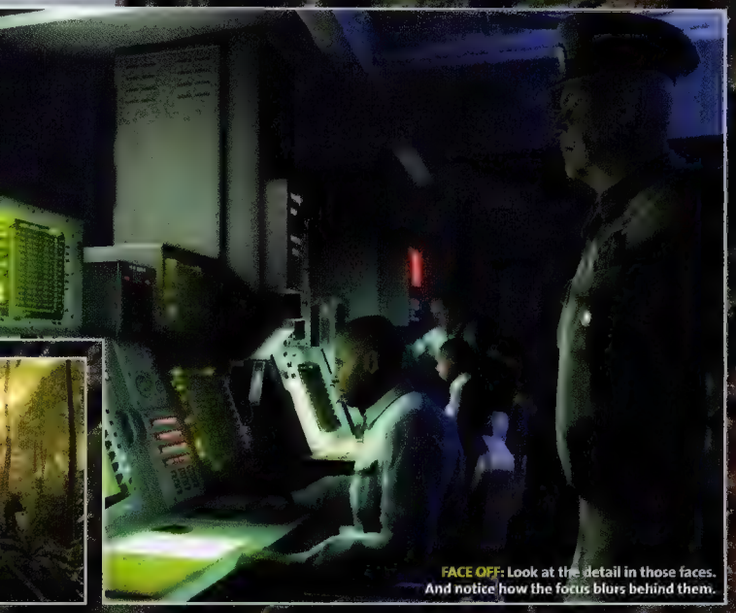
PlayStation 2

A Blood Red Dawn Arises



FACE OFF: Look at the detail in those faces. And notice how the focus blurs behind them.

IT'S JUST LIKE LOST!

Crytek's early demo shows the awesome power of their technology

We've seen the game in action and it's a cavalcade of wow. Here's what happened, second by second.

00.00: The sun rises. Camera pans west across islands, lagoons and white beaches.

00.10: The sun sets, turning the sky a bloody red.

00.15: A crouching soldier brushes through palm. Leaves bend and twang. It just looks real.

00.17: Sunlight filters softly through thousands of individual palm fronds.

00.24: Incredibly detailed 'soft' foliage shadows wave gently across parched, cracked earth.

00.28: A lorry burns, consumed by a cloud of 'soft particles'.

00.32: An unburnt lorry drives straight through a hut, scattering its pieces onto a hundred trajectories.

00.38: We descend through thick, 'volumetric clouds' to a view of the huge island. The blues, whites and greens of this view are utterly compelling. It looks just like Lost!

00.49: A row of heads show off 'advanced shader technology.' Translation – skin just looks real.

00.51: Whooping and references to Lost from journos. Fade.

LOVING THE ALIEN

The world's dullest shed screenshot? Or the first glimpse of Crysis's mysterious aliens?

Why do these soldiers seem so worried about this shadowy potting shed? Are they scared there might be spiders? Those three blue lights are a clue... brightening up the image reveals a tantalising glimpse of a seemingly three-legged alien lurking inside (see our yellow outline). It clearly won't move like anything we've seen before. But even this isn't the whole story, as there are various different aliens – some are so large they must be climbed, using magnetic boots! And why must the US and Korea eventually unite to fight them? They like the cold and have moved on from freezing their immediate surroundings to trying to ice up the entire Pacific and, from there, the world.

ILLEGAL ALIEN: Monster or indistinct blob? We think the former. It looks a bit like some kind of 'land octopus'. Hmm...

HERO A NEW ENEMY

ONIMUSHA DAWN OF DREAMS

Developer: Rocksteady Studios Publisher: Eidos ETA: May 2006

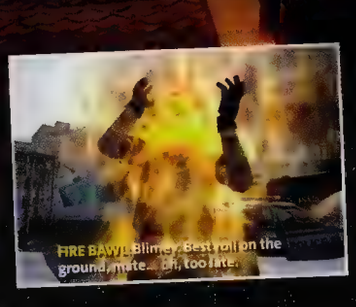
LET'S CLEAN UP THIS TOWN!

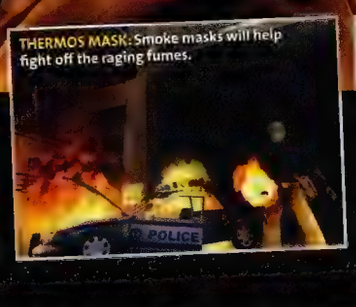
Urban Chaos is about mayhem and rioting – and you get to clean it up, not cause it.

In *Urban Chaos: Riot Response*, you don't get to make the headlines, you get to sort them out. It's like being some kind of extreme cleaning lady, mopping up all the crap that's infected the unnamed city within which *Urban Chaos* takes place. And you'll be playing Nick Mason, a member of Unit T-Zero, a squad of elite cops called forth to rid the city of its criminal cancer, organized gangs that have brought the place to its knees and caused the mayor to declare a state of emergency.

Formerly known as *Roll Call*, and then *Zero Tolerance: City Under Fire*, Eidos has finally settled on *Urban Chaos: Riot Response*, and it's packing some nifty ideas in between its gritty urban this 'n' that. Instead of playing a bounty hunter or assassin in this first-person shooter, you've as much a duty to the city as your own health bar. As well as squaring off against sociopathic criminals, you'll have to cope with raging fires, in a game engine that's proud to be able to model backdrafts and Molotov cocktails. We're not too sure how hands-on that fireman role may be, though: you seem to be assisting the emergency services, not taking control of them. Let's hope that assistance involves more than just blasting away at sweary thugs, as it could make *Urban Chaos* stand out a much-needed mile from other first-person shooters.

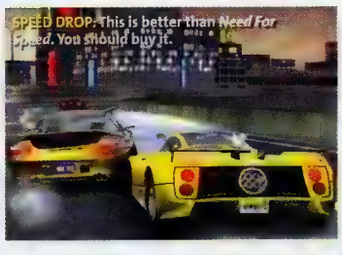
PSM RECKONS *Aside from some thick lashings of flame, it's far from unique in terms of looks. But we're intrigued by the idea of having to cope with crippling civic disasters in the form of out-of-control fires and the like. And less of the shooting gangsters in the face with Uzis, please – there are a billion other games out there that let us do that already. The last (only) game to let you play a fireman, incidentally, was Firefighter F.D.18 (PS2 #17 76%), not that we expect Urban Chaos to be particularly like that quench-the-flames 'em-up. We hope this will be good.*


FIRE BAWL: Blimey. Best roll on the ground, mate... Eh, too late.


THERMOS MASK: Smoke masks will help fight off the raging fumes.

SHINE TIME: The cars look even shinier in *Midnight Club Remix*...

SELF CITY: It's the same as the last game in essence, but with a new city.


SPEED DROP: This is better than *Need For Speed*. You should buy it.

IT'S BIKE THAT: It's not just cars, you know. It's bikes as well. All bases covered. Ish.

Developer: Rockstar Publisher: Rockstar ETA: Late March

CLUB OPENS FOR BUSINESS IN JAPAN

Midnight Club 3 gets 'remixed' and ends up costing less... eh?

Rejoice: not content to merely paste a budget sticker onto *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition* and chuck it back out there, Rockstar is adding a mass of new content. *Dub Edition Remix* will hit the £20 Platinum label with a whole new city (Tokyo) new battle maps, extra music and 24 new cars. This makes it an attractive prospect not only for those yet to sample its delights, but for existing owners. And *MC3* was already a great game as it was: arguably better than the *Need For Speed* titles that so overshadowed it. We absolutely loved it, we did.

PSM RECKONS *Whichever way you see this, the bottom line is it's a good thing for us: Midnight Club 3 was great and now it's cheaper and bigger. Yet this, plus the PS2 reworking of PSP's reworking of GTA3 (Liberty City Stories), smacks of an unsettling desperation for cash between real GTA paydays. Hmm. Still, between them, the two updates will doubtless make pots of money, so all will be well. Hurrah!*

YETI CASH: Judging by this, the Yeti will be a character in *MK: Armageddon*.

Developer: Midway **Publisher:** Midway **ETA:** Christmas

MORTAL KOMEBACK!

Mortal Kombat: Armageddon breathes life into Midway's grizzly beat-em-up series – play as every MK character. Ever.

Liu Kang. Goro. Noob Saibot. And – who could forget? – Tremor (from *MK: Special Forces*). You'll be able to play as *every* character from the MK series in Midway's better-than-it-looks *MK: Armageddon*. That's over 60 gory masochists set to rip out each other's vertebrae – plus a new Kreate-A-Player mode.

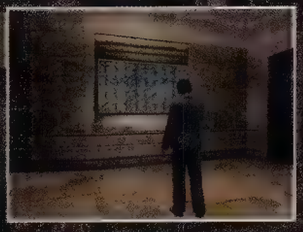
Elsewhere, fatalities have been simplified, so rather than remembering complex button presses, *MK: Armageddon* allows you to build custom finishing moves. This can involve ripping your opponent's limbs off, or serating their spine, before casually tossing them into steamy bath of lava. But not Mr Matey. Sadly.

There's also a new Konquest mode, playing more like the excellent *MK: Shaolin Monks* than the slightly empty, RPG-skewed, last attempt, plus a new Air Kombat system – allowing for cheesy movie-style air juggles – and Precision Throws, so you can lob people into scenery. Nice.

PSM RECKONS *It may look the same, but the new features are genuinely exciting. Sort of. Hands-on report next month.*

KILLING ME (NOT VERY) SOFTLY: You can concoct your own fatalities this time.

PAINTED LOVE: Look at all those paintings. Perhaps you'll be stealing them. Who knows?



Developer: The Collective **Publisher:** 2K Games **ETA:** May

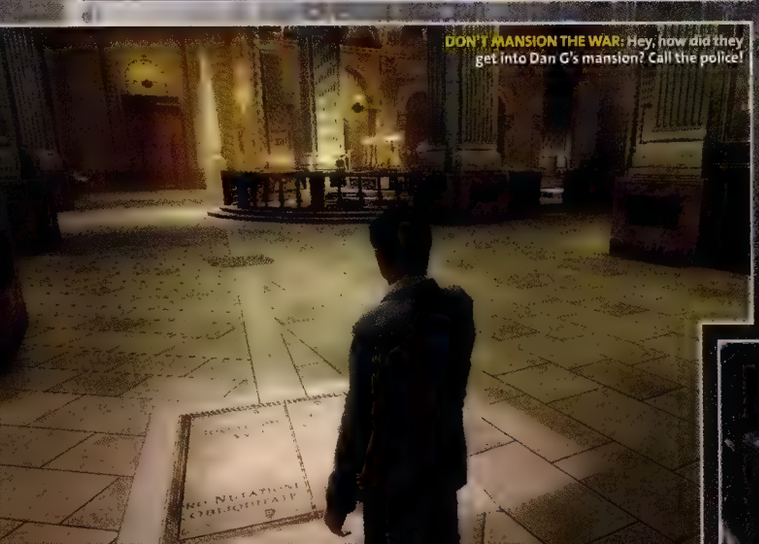
HANKS A LOT

Tom Hanks is in the Da Vinci Code film. A generic man is in the game. Whoop.

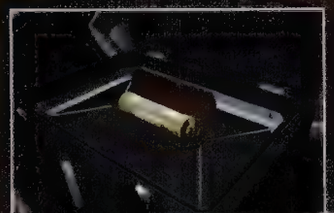
Author Dan Brown's book The Da Vinci Code is the biggest-selling novel of all time. But will it be the biggest-selling *videogame* of all time? Probably not, not even if it's really, *really* good. But will it be?

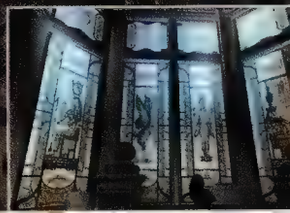
Charles Cecil, lead designer of the fantastic *Broken Sword*, has joined developers The Collective *(Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure)* to help with the design of the game. Revolving around secret societies and ancient cover-ups, it'll feature "action-orientated suspense" which we take to mean fighting mixed with exploring, research and plenty of riddle-solving.

PSM RECKONS *The game will be based on the film (directed by Ron Howard of Cocoon 'fame') rather than the book, so expect a little artistic license to be taken here and there. Otherwise, this should translate nicely to PS2, especially with Cecil at the helm – the original* Broken Sword *was similar to The Da Vinci Code in terms of plot. So give it a chance even if you haven't read the book – this could be the great adventure PS2's been crying out for. Well, whimpering for.*



DON'T MANSION THE WAR: Hey, how did they get into Dan G's mansion? Call the police!



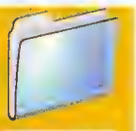


grand theft auto ON PS2
Liberty City Stories

Liberty City Stories is coming to PS2 soon, but the game remains under wraps. How will it turn out? Time to put on our magical wishing trousers...

Definite details as to what *Liberty City Stories* will look like on PS2? Forget it. Rockstar are remaining secretive beyond confirming the game's existence. But what option will they take? A simple straight port of the PSP game? Or will they add a few new features and a twist or two? Or will they take PSM2's advice and use the excellent *LCS* backdrop to create the ultimate San Andreas? Here's how it could go. Start wishing... now!

THE EASY ROUTE
(aka What Rockstar Shouldn't Do)



1 Rockstar find the folder on their giant collective desktop called *'Liberty City Stories'* and make an identical copy labelled *'Liberty City Stories (PS2 Version)'*. They drag it around for a while, mulling over what to do with it. Do they bother changing anything?

2 They use their magical computer pencils to improve the textures and character models. It looks a lot better and the draw distance has improved immeasurably. They jazz up the physics and vehicle handling and add some shiny new chrome effects.

3 "Hmm, should we change the plot?" they wonder. They decide not to, but add a handful of new missions that 'expand' the existing story. This means they can label the game as a 'Director's Cut' or a 'Special Edition', netting them another billion sales.

4 They look through reviews and read about the insane timing of the "Morgue Party Resurrection" and how hard it is to aim with the analogue nub in "Caught In The Act" and tweak them accordingly along with another hundred frustrations and flaws.

5 Rockstar finally release a near-identical version of the PSP iteration of *Liberty City Stories*. The world sighs, loses its faith in the company and never buys another *GTA* game ever again. Or, more likely, it sells binloads and only a few hardcore fans are disillusioned.

PSM RECKONS *Whatever Rockstar do, we trust they'll release a worthy product. When it comes to GTA they never do things by halves. But wait – shouldn't they be away working on next-gen GTA? Which in turn has us wondering, are all the 'better' employees working on PS3 stuff? How important is LCS PS2 to Rockstar, really? We expect greatness and nothing less, OK?*

THE PSM2 FANTASY OPTION
(aka What We'd Love Rockstar To Do...)

1 Rockstar forget about the PSP version entirely and focus on creating a worthwhile new addition to the *GTA* series. They begin by changing the face of the most important aspect of the game – Liberty City. By setting the game 15 years in the future, so we don't see the same old things *again*.

2 To reflect the 'near-future' setting, the game adopts a similar look to that of *GTA2* – a dark, gritty future, but with enough ties to the present day to make it believable. Blade Runner-style hover cars line the skies (er, maybe not) and the crime rate is higher than ever.

3 The mission structure is completely overhauled. You can now make decisions mid-task that affect the plot or what the other gangs think of you. Like *Mercenaries* but way more fleshed-out. No more timed missions, just sensible objectives. Bliss.

4 New additions to the game engine. For example, land that shifts or changes as a result of natural disasters like earthquakes. This is probably more of a next-gen thing, but they could experiment with the idea (and others like it) in *LCS*.

5 Characters from older *GTA* games return, only they've aged and have a greater influence on the city. Tommy Vercetti, for example, could return as a multi-millionaire mobster. Rockstar love cameos, as the appearance of the *GTA3* 'hero' in *San Andreas* proves. Fingers crossed.

THE MOST LIKELY OPTION
(aka What We Expect Rockstar To Do)

1 They take the existing *Liberty City* map and expand it by adding interiors. The eating/stamina mechanics from *San Andreas* are carried over and clothes shops are added. The way the city looks also changes depending on the setting, which may be in the past.

2 The plot is based around CJ (the 'hero' of *San Andreas*) and his exploits in Liberty City, as shown in the special 'Introduction' DVD that came with the *SA* soundtrack. Either that, or the lead character comes across CJ at some point.

3 A whole shedload of new missions will be added, although they'll be based around the same old *GTA* structure of a safe house and characters who hand out tasks. The ambulance, vigilante and fire missions will return for a fifth time and we'll weep with frustration.

4 In *GTA3*, a tunnel in Shoreside Vale was apparently unfinished. Perhaps in *Liberty City Stories* it'll be open and give you access to another area of the city or a section of countryside. Whatever happens, they *have* to expand it somehow... don't they?

5 To add kudos to the game and make it seem like a proper addition to the series, a fair-to-middling licensed soundtrack and some new B-list voice actors are featured. It's quality, but not the big-budget production that we're used to.

THE INTRODUCTION

If you bought the condensed version of the *San Andreas* soundtrack, you'll have seen The Introduction, a short DVD prequel to the events of *San Andreas*. In one scene, we see CJ nicking a motor, showing the life of crime he was leading before his mother's death brought him back to Los Santos in San Andreas. Will *LCS* on PS2 expand this story?

DOCTOR 'DREAS: Why not use the backstory from the early moments of *San Andreas* as a foundation for the new *Liberty City* story. Makes sense.

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WIN A LUXURY TELEVISION!

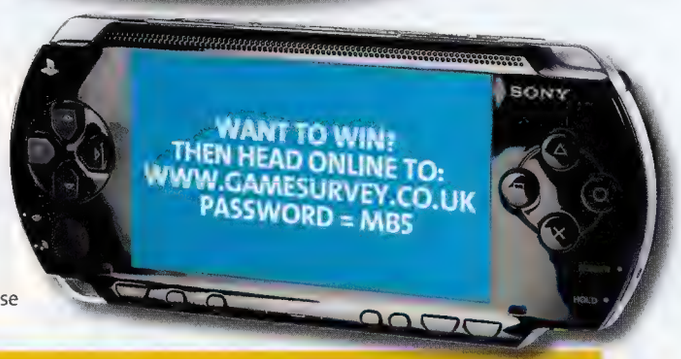
Win a whopping telly! Failing that, there's a PSP up for grabs, too. Tough life, eh?

* more in fact

Who wants a massive telly for free, eh? The fact that you're reading this mag makes it likely you've got a love for technology – and now we're giving you a chance to gear yourself up for the imminent high-def revolution. When PS3 arrives, its games will offer a whole new level of a visual quality, with the console able to output crisp HDTV for your eyes to drink like a Chocolate & Optrex milkshake. The TV is a HD-Ready 32" Sony LCD set, whose scientific name is KDL-S32A12U (in case you want to check it out online, and confirm that it is, indeed, both sexy and expensive).

So, how do you go about getting your hands on it? Normally, we'd get you to answer some trivia about video games, but this time we want you to answer questions about yourself, and your habits as a gamer – to be entered for the prize draw for the widescreen beauty detailed above, you'll need to take part in the Future Games Readership survey 2006. Also, one runner-up will get a PSP (which is hardly chump change). Once you're ready, you'll need to go to website **www.gamesurvey.co.uk** and enter the password '**mb5**' (without the apostrophes). To qualify for the prize draw, you'll have to submit your answers before May 8th.

And even if you're not gasping to be part of the whole HD gang, there's still some worth in filling it out – it's your chance to give us feedback about PSM2, and yourself as a gamer, allowing us to make a better mag for you. Be honest with those answers, too – what you say won't affect your chances of winning. And if you don't fill it out, we'll deliberately make PSM2 worse just to spite you. Kidding!



HAVE YOUR SAY! CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING SIMPLE QUESTIONS?

WHICH GAMES CONSOLE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN PSM2?

WHICH GAMES ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

HOW MANY GAMES HAVE YOU BOUGHT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS?

WHAT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU OWN?

PLUS 22 MORE 'AMAZING' QUESTIONS ONLINE!

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY HERE!

If you don't have access to the internet, you can obtain a paper copy of the survey by sending a self-addressed envelope (no stamp needed) to the following Freepost address:

Charles Hutchings (Game Survey)
Market Research
Future Publishing
Freepost
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2XF

TERMS AND CONDITIONS No purchase is necessary to enter the prize draw. Prize draw open to UK residents only. If you are under 16, please get permission first from a parent/guardian to fill in the survey. Employees of Future Publishing or its sponsors may not enter. Prize winners will be notified by telephone. No correspondence will be entered into. The sponsors reserve the right to supply prizes of equivalent value rather than those illustrated. No cash alternatives. Only one entry per person is permitted.. If you hit a potato hard enough with a tennis racket, could you make chips, or would you just end up with mash? Hmm.

PS2

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UMD MOVIES DOOMED?

Big releases cancelled as true UMD sales figures emerge – and they're not looking pretty.

Movie publishers Paramount, Warner and even Sony itself are scaling back film releases on UMD due to poor sales. Until now, the official line has been that PSP-format movies were shifting 'surprisingly well' though, tellingly, no figures were made available.

It's now emerged, however, that the top titles generally move around 100,000 copies, while the average film peaks at less than half that. That doesn't sound bad until you realise there are over six million PSP owners – meaning just three-quarters of a percent are picking up the average release. Even the most successful titles are only bought by around 1.7 percent of PSP owners. Ouch. A senior Warner spokesman was quoted as being "disappointed with consumer demand" so far.

The top-selling release as yet has been (drum roll) Napoleon Dynamite – perhaps unsurprisingly, the best selling films have been comedies that appeal to youngish men. Beavis & Butthead and Dave Chappelle's Show have also sold well. Consequently, weightier releases such as Warner Home Video's Goodfellas are actually being cancelled, while Sony plans to help things along with the 35-year old Monty Python's Flying Circus (?!).

Oddly, Sony are considering releasing an adaptor that would let PSP pipe its movies onto a TV screen, in an attempt to jack up UMD interest but in PSM2's opinion that would be a confusing move fraught with problems.

existing video-to-digital converters. They're not cheap – starting from £40-£50 – and PSP's is likely to be similar. Fine, but in reality you can wander into a supermarket and buy a whole DVD player for £30 and a film for £5-£15. Plus, while films on the PSP's screen look gorgeous, its smaller size means a relatively low resolution – stretched across a TV the image would be less impressive.

//"NOT EVEN A PERCENT OF YOU ARE FORKING OUT FOR UMD MOVIES"//

An increasingly pressing problem is simple shelf space, as various new formats such as HD DVD and the Sony-backed Blu-Ray emerge and compete with existing DVDs and UMDs. The lowest-selling formats will naturally be squeezed out, which will hardly increase sales. As things stand, something needs to be done to revive the format.

PSM RECKONS *A 'lead' like the one suggested would actually be a box of electronics on a cable, similar to*

And would this lead let you play games on a TV, which would suffer the same awkward comparisons against their PS2 versions? And if not, why not? It seems there's little positive to be gained by retrofitting this jewel-like handheld as a simple player when the result would be more expensive, more awkward and of lower quality than the norm. What's needed is quick, cheap and above all simple *downloads – or UMDs at impulse-buy prices.*

"TIMBERS? SHIVERED, CAPTAIN"

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Tying in with the forthcoming sequel to the hit original, *Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* comes a PSP game featuring all the action and characters from the sequel. Yes, rights to the likeness of Johnny Depp means that you get to see his actual beard, rather than just making do with the back of his rat's-tail head. The game promises access to scenes from the films, as well as some new levels original to the game. Could be one for the ladies. *Could* be.

PSM RECKONS *We'll love the film, but whether it can translate to a (probably 'for kids') PSP game is another matter. We shall see.*

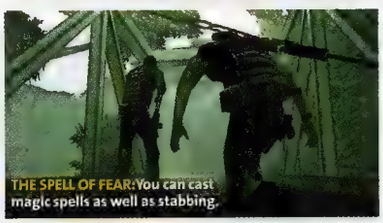
MOVIE MAGIC: How like the film will this be? Not sure.

"BUY BUY BUY! CELL CELL CELL!"

SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIAL SHOTS!

The recently PSM2-splashed *Double Agent* game (on every format under the sun, bar PSP) has guffed out of the line-up until late 2006. Not so the small-size compilation game *Splinter Cell: Essentials*. That's on target and (Third Eschalon gremlins permitting) should be reviewed next issue.

PSM RECKONS *Playing the best bits of all the* Splinter Cell *in one portable game sounds almost too good to be true, but these shots confirm quality.*



THE SPELL OF FEAR: You can cast magic spells as well as stabbing.

TEKKEN ME OUT: PSP needs a 3D fighting game, so we're looking forward to this.

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION

You'll be *Tekken* this on holiday, *Tekken* it to the park, *Tekken* a bad joke to breaking point...

Based on the *Tekken 5* coin-op, this handheld scrapper from Namco features 30 characters from throughout the series' history, including Jin Kazama, King, Heihachi Mishima, Nina Williams, Bryan Fury and Yoshimitsu. Loads then, and the content mudslide doesn't end there – there are 19 fully-destructible arenas, wireless multi-play and a clutch of pick-up-and-play minigames as well.

Although we've played *Tekken* to death, being able to play it on the move suits the gameplay perfectly. But will hardcore fans be able to pull off the game's elaborate combos and special moves with the PSP's palsied nub? We reckon Namco should release some kind of attachment, like Capcom's *Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max* D-pad widget.

PSM RECKONS *Well it's* Tekken, *innit? Arguably one of the best whack-'em-ups in the world, if a little stale when compared to the likes of* Soul Calibur. *The only decent 3D PSP rucker so far has been the wrestling, but if this isn't good, we'll eat our hands.*

CATCH THE REBOUND

Guess what? *NBA Ballers* is back! And it's the shiznittingdon!*

OK, you didn't buy *NBA Ballers* on PS2. Nor did anybody you know. It was quite good, though, so hopefully *Ballers: Rebound* will bring the PS2 version's quite-goodness to PSP. This means super-slick court action with the NBA's top stars like, erm, oh, the tall fella. And that one with the hair. Yes. A bag of PSP exclusive features will debut, including Dunk Fest (a minigame which consists of slam dunking) and King of Thieves, which we're presuming is a game about stealing. Not literally, mind. Although Wi-Fi connectivity is yet to be announced we'd back the house on it being included. Well, Nathan's house. We don't want to take risks.

While *Ballers* on PS2 featured some of the most scarily realistic players ever, *Ballers Rebound* will let you fiddle with up to 100 customisation options. And each player you create can be dropped into the full-on career mode. Woo.

PSM RECKONS *This will give* NBA Street *a run for its money for sure, although who's going to be actually interested in it is another question. PS2's version was outsold by* Pinball. *No, we don't remember it either.*

*Pronounced to rhyme with 'Dick Whittington'.

"THE FIRST 'LIVIN' LA VIDA LOCO' JOKE!"

LOCO ROCO ARRIVES

This quirky Japanese curio was one of the biggest attractions at last year's Tokyo Game Show. Your goal is to simply guide an orange blob around a colourful sunshine world, picking up other blobs to make yourself bigger. As you pass through objects and narrow tunnels, your blob splits and drips like mercury. Well, not like *Mercury*, but, well, similar. It looks amazing, the idea is brilliantly simple – *Loco Roco* could be the answer to your post-*Katamari* woes. But this ain't no kids game – expect brain-kneading puzzles and complex platform sections to help keep things interesting. The sooner the UK gets this, the better.

PSM RECKONS *It might look like a Sunny Delight-driven nightmare, but this – along with* Lumines *and* Exit *– will be another excellent puzzler to add to PSP's growing catalogue of them. Hoorah for that.*

BLOB ONE OUT: These blobs will rule your life soon.

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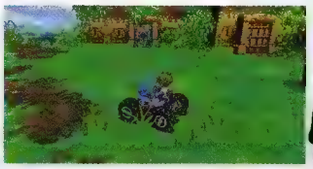
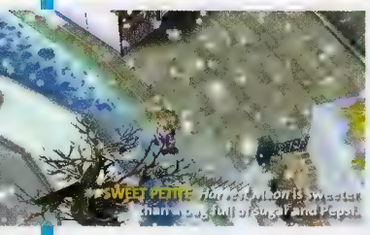
"NEW MOON"

HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE

Explore an island, set up a farm and interact with the residents of the nearby town in this farming game. Your goal? Simply to build your business, find a wife, get married and have children. You have to tend the crops, feed the animals, clean up, cut the grass, milk the cows, collect eggs from the chickens and hundreds of other duties. As you play, the island's mysteries are revealed and the seasons change, keeping things interesting and giving you a diversion from farming. We love *Harvest Moon* and we expect this to be great.





SWEET PETITE: *Harvest Moon* is sweeter than a bag full of sugar and Pepsi.

"THAT'S COMIC SENSE"

KONAMI COMICS

These unique 'media experience' UMDs give you an animated comic book, offering an in-depth backstory of the *Metal Gear Solid* and *Silent Hill* games. In the *Silent Hill Experience*, as well as viewing the comic, you can listen to music from the series and watch exclusive video clips, including an interview with the director of the forthcoming film. In the *Metal Gear Solid* Digital Comic, you actually interact with the story, changing its outcome by selecting plot branches. Sort of like a "Choose Your Own Adventure" book for the 21st century. But with big guns. Swearing too, probably.

REMEMBER, YOU NEED TO ARM YOURSELF WITH WHATEVER WEAPONS YOU CAN FIND.
HOW COULD I FORGET? IT'S OK, THOUGH. I JUST FOUND SOME CHAFFS, A SCOOM, AND A M9.

ASS LIKE THAT: Hang on – forget this pic, what's going on down there?

BIG FUN: Multi-player, this is the world's most fun game. Nearly.

STONE COLD: This makes us feel old. But excited too. Yes.

POWER STONE COLLECTION

The beat-'em-up assault rages on with this classic Dreamcast series.

If ever a game was worthy of a re-release it's *Power Stone*, Capcom's critically-acclaimed Dreamcast beat-'em-up. Originally released in 1999, the game's pick-up-and-play arcade controls and interactive environments set it apart from the boring side-on scrappers people were used to at the time.

You could grab pretty much anything and use it as a weapon, and the levels smashed up around you as the battle raged on. This PSP release contains both *Power Stone* and *Power Stone 2*, both of which were several kinds of excellent. As for new features, new minigames and weapons have been included, as well as a few graphical tweaks and improved camera angles to suit the PSP's screen. The game also uses game-sharing technology, so four people can fight against each other with only one copy of the game.

PSM RECKONS *We've yet to have a hands-on with this, but we do know that it's going to be brilliant. We loved the Dreamcast originals and think the simplistic, enjoyable gameplay suits PSP perfectly. The frantic combat of and insane minigames of are slices of our past we can't wait to revisit.*

JAK IN THE BOX: We love *Jak*, so hopefully we'll love this as well.

DAXTER'S LAB: The platforming ottsel (it's a type of weasel, people) will be popping onto PSP very soon.

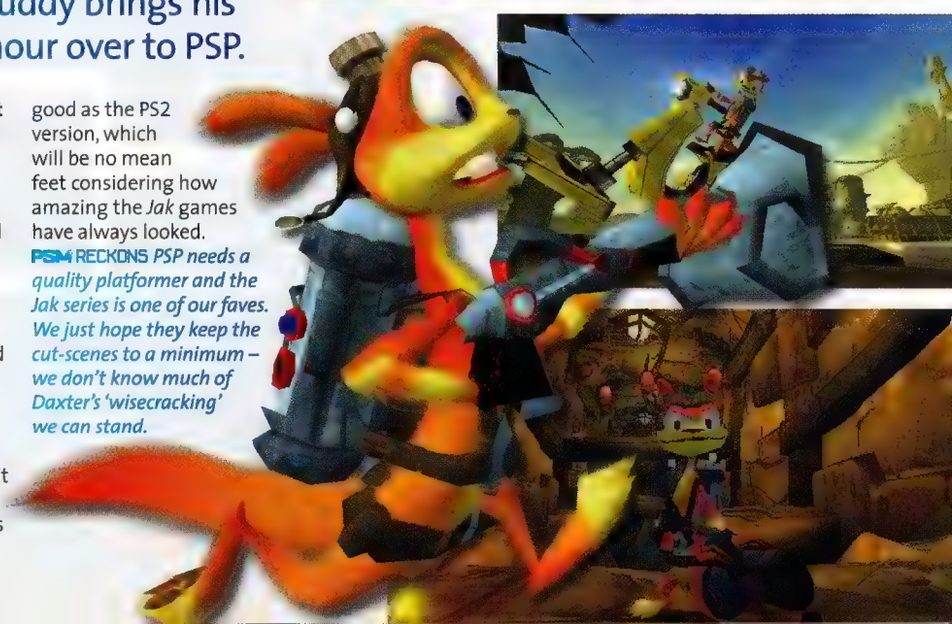
DAXTER

Jak's platforming buddy brings his winning, furry humour over to PSP.

Remember at the start of *Jak 2* when Daxter saves Jak from the evil Baron Praxus? Well, that was never really explained, but in this prequel you'll find out how Daxter managed to find his way into the dictator's lair and rescue his buddy.

Because Daxter is a tiny animal, he's a lot more athletic and agile than Jak, meaning the platforming is more varied and acrobatic. He also has a special spray gun that he can use for various things, including pointing it towards the ground and hovering. The developers promise it'll look as good as the PS2 version, which will be no mean feet considering how amazing the *Jak* games have always looked.

PSM RECKONS *PSP needs a quality platformer and the Jak series is one of our faves. We just hope they keep the cut-scenes to a minimum – we don't know much of Daxter's 'wisecracking' we can stand.*



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INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1
Memory Save: 472kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...
What does 'going to the mattresses' – as mentioned by Sonny and Tom – actually mean?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"It's actually a real horse's head in the bed – they got it from a dog food factory y'know."

GAMEFAX
Violent
GTA clone
License
Easy

TRIVBURST
- Take part in all the film's most memorable scenes.
- Become a rising gangster in the Corleone syndicate.
- Indulge in racketeering.
- Beat up lots of blokes.
- And women too, if you like.

The Godfather™ THE GAME

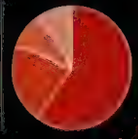
We believe in America. But we're not so sure if we believe in this...

Poor old EA. They were always going to have a job on their hands converting one of the most sacred of film cows into a prime slab of gaming beef, and there were no end of naysayers ready to pounce on them for every little mistake. "It'll probably have 50 collectible bonus tangerines!" chortled one PSM2 staffer, cleverly referencing the way the film uses orange fruit as a signpost for death. "Maybe there'll be a minigame where you chase a small child around pretending to be a monster, then die of a heart attack!" suggested someone else, showing that he actually remembered a bit out of the film. "The Fusellis have challenged you to a gang war: Respect +1000!" joked someone else, making an oh-so-clever comment on the way every game seems to be nicking *Need For Speed*'s 'urban yoof' attitude and obsession with stats. We

"IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO BE A JOB MAKING THIS SACRED COW INTO A PRIME SLICE OF GAMING BEEF"

TOP 5 DONS

- Don Johnson
- Donnie Darko
- Don E Osmond
- Don Perignon...
- Er... King Don?



GAMEPIE

60% Driving.
20% Whacking.
10% Extorting.
10% Restarting.

ANSWER

It's a declaration of war – when a full-on vendetta was on, Sicilian mobsters would move away from their homes for fear of reprisals and sleep, quite literally, on mattresses. See?

BRANDO RECOGNITION

It's a tribute to EA's massive pockets that they got old mumble-chops himself to stuff his cheeks with cotton wool and reprise his role as Vito Corleone. It's virtual Brando and it's a treat to see him in action. Though you'll only rarely see Marlon himself on your journey through the mob's ranks, he gets to mutter some memorable lines – including one soliloquy on people who seem to *want* you to whack them which must have been written by a die-hard *GTA* fan – before he meets his angina-related demise. And no, you can't hurt him. It was the first th ing we tried.

The prelude sees a slimmed-down Vito cuddling your childhood self as you blub over your dead dad.

DRIVING MISS CRAZY: Here you are driving. You'll be doing a lot of this. More than you could ever believe, in fact.

SO NEAR AND YET SO CAR: Motor-to-motor shootouts are a bit tricky, not helped by the loopy computer AI.

GO OUT WITH A BANG: Stood too near an explosion, did you? Doofus.

UNPOLICED BRUTALITY: Kick in innocent civilians. Just for a laugh.

HEALTH OF OPTIONS: Shootouts like this one are certain to rob you of whacking great chunks of your health bar.

You can't complain about not getting involved in the action, either. This isn't *Enter The Matrix*, where you're sent off to retrieve a wholly invented trinket that barely matters in the film – you're a pivotal part of the Corleone syndicate, lurking in the background but taking part in every key moment in the film. The horse's head in the bed? You sneak it there, merrily throttling guards along the way. Michael's assassination of Sollozo and McClusky? You plant the gun in the bogs, then drive the getaway car. Sonny's shooting? Brando's hospital stay? Michael's arrest? Every scene is fleshed out with dozens of extras to whack, ruining the drama of the deaths somewhat (it's difficult to get excited about the execution of the police chief when you've already strangled half a dozen boys in blue to get to him) but it keeps you involved. In-between missions, you're left to build up the Corleone empire by hijacking trucks, robbing banks and taking over businesses. The latter are where your Respect comes in – build it up high enough by finishing missions and whacking rivals in the 'recommended' style (bat-beatings for bad creditors, but a faceful of Molotov cocktail for arsonists) and there's no need for violence in shops at all, as terrified bakers and barbers usually stump up the readies the first time you twitch an eyebrow. If they're made of sterner stuff, though, you'll have to use some 'persuasion.' Which is where things get a bit unpleasant.

"ELECTRONIC ARTS HAVE DONE EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO MAKE THE GODFATHER WORK"

all had a good chuckle, we really did. And then that last one *actually happened*.

Really, though, it isn't as bad as all that. Sure, there's a little twinge of 'sacrilege!' the first time you see the Electronic Arts logo appear on the screen in that distinctive Godfather font. And yes, there's something a bit odd about seeing a little marionette hand appear above key characters. But really, EA have really done everything in their power to make this work. That really is Brando flapping his walrus-like cheeks on the screen, captured down to the last dimple and voicing brand-new Corleone-speak in one of his last roles. Jimmy Caan and Robert Duvall are there too – in voice only – and so are Luca Brasi and a dozen other key characters. The only rotten tangerine in the barrel's Michael – he's reduced to a no-mark, his every appearance reminding you that Pacino's signed with *Scarface* instead – but you can't blame them for that. They've tried.

VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN

The Godfather's hitting system is basic but brutal. After locking on to a target – a rival enforcer, say, or a till that you've decided to smash with your *bare hands* to show the local hotelier you mean business – you simply bash the right analogue forward to flail away with fists and feet. Grab an enemy, though, and the possibilities expand – you can shake them about like a ragdoll, for instance, or wind up and deliver a tooth-loosening haymaker. Press R3 and L3 and you'll strangle them – twitch the left analogue towards the scenery and you'll slam them into a wall or counter. When they sink to their knees, you can simply haul them

ROADBLOCK PARTY: A police roadblock foils your cunning escape here. Try again, eh?

TYRED OUT: Cars provide cover but will eventually give out in a blaze of glory.

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Coercion, bribery, thinly veiled threats – *The Godfather's* all about the gentle art of 'persuading' people to your way of thinking. You'll often get best results by shying away from violence, using cash or your rep to bring people round to your way of thinking. When that fails, of course, you're perfectly within your rights to shoot up the local bar and smash the waiter's head into glass cabinets until he blubbers like a baby. Here are the different levels of 'persuasion'.

FLIRTING! Chat to ladies and you might be given 'flirt' [illegible] Play it cool.

BRIBING! Gun battles with the cops are to be avoided. Hint: Approach Johnny Law with cash for an easy life.

[illegible] Some staff will be so in awe of your rep that they'll spill the beans with zero effort. Hint: Be nice.

STRANGLING! A couple of thumbs on the windpipe [illegible] Try not to do it [illegible] eh?

SLAMMING! A vigorous shake and a quick bash and you're the boss. Hint: Mix it up with slaps and a kick.

SMASHING! Not only does it smash him up but you can [illegible] place too. Hint: Use his face to open the till.

"IT'S NOT GRAPHIC, BUT THE GODFATHER CHALLENGES MANHUNT FOR ALL-ROUND UNPLEASANTNESS"

TURN DOWN THAT RACKET! I'M TRYING TO SLEEP WITH THE FISHES!

Extorting tribute out of the local businesses is your meat and potatoes, but for heavy cash you'll be wanting to get in on the rackets. Certain shops have back rooms that only open up once you've scared the owners silly, and these lead to speakeasies and illegal casinos. If you've got good respect and street smarts, make a beeline for the boss and give him a cash offer – he'll probably admit he's had a good run and consent to being bought out. Alternatively, bludgeon your way in, murder everyone in sight and stamp the owner to death. Fun, though less profitable in the long term.

PIMP MY BRIBE: Give the man in the funny hat a wedge of cash and take over his business with minimal hassle. Simple.

SHATTER BOX: Alternatively, knock him to the ground, kick his face in and throw all his lady-friends out of a window. Ta daah!

SHUT THAT DOOR!

In games, it's often the little things that make a difference. Case in point: the different ways you get out of cars in *Total Overdose*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Driver: Parallel Lines* and *The Godfather*. *Overdose* makes full-speed disembarkation into an art, letting you lean out of the driver-side door in preparation for a slow-mo leap. *GTA's* a step down, but still does OK. *Parallel Lines* lets you jump out at full speed but takes off half your health – which is stupid (though also logical, paradoxically) but acceptable. In *The Godfather*, pressing the 'get out' button makes you coast to a stop, ease yourself onto the pavement and gently close the door *even if the car's on fire*, costing valuable milliseconds which might be the difference being you dying in an explosion and watching it from a safe distance with your feet up. Note to EA: If you're thinking of putting a 'check that all the windows are up' option into the next *Need For Speed* game, don't bother.

SURREAL MOMENT: "Now, did I leave my Enya CD in the changer, or is it..." BOOM! "Aah! My face! My precious face!"

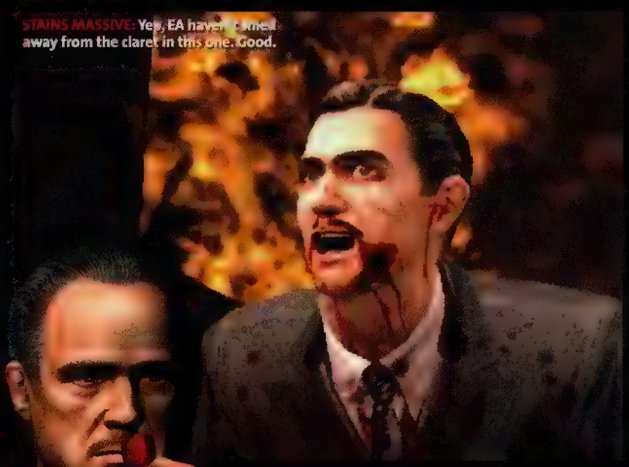
to their feet and continue the punishment. There's really no reason to do this, but we often (frighteningly often) found ourselves mixing things up, starting things with a dab of strangulation, moving onto a bit of wall-smashy, then rounding up with a good shoeing. It isn't massively graphic, but it challenges *Manhunt* for all-round unpleasantness, especially thanks to the inclusion of 'executions' – inappropriately-comically-titled ('Hats off exection performed! Respect +100!') set-pieces of violence prompted with a stab of ⓡ3.

At range, things get fuzzier. *Godfather* isn't designed for run-and-gun strafing, and you'll haemorrhage health in

"YOU PERFORMED A HATS-OFF EXECUTION! RESPECT +100!"

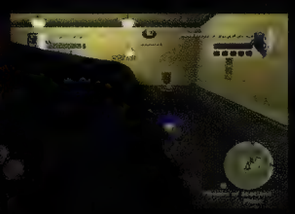
anything like a point-blank gun battle. When artillery's involved, the way to play it is 'crouched', popping out from behind corners or counters to shoot people as they break their own cover. Though you're occasionally scuppered by level design –

MESS-AGE IN A BOTTLE: A cheeky Molotov cocktail will see off most enemies fast.



STAINS MASSIVE: Yes, EA haven't shied away from the claret in this one. Good.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE: Store owners not swayed by your [illegible] all to pieces instead.



TITFER TAT: "Yeah? Think my hat's stupid, do ya? Let's see how it looks IN YOUR ASS!"

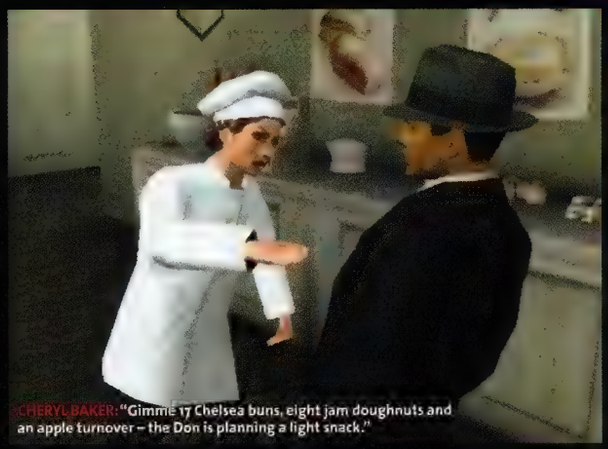
WHACKS ON, WHACKS OFF

EA haven't shied away from brutality in *Godfather* – Sonny leaks blood like a raw steak during the level crossing scene – and there's no shortage of ways to ventilate men's heads. Once any enemy has suffered a duffing up, he'll be weakened enough to pull off a close-range execution. There are nearly 20 of these, from the bog-standard (a double-tap to the back of the head), via the artistic (a backhand slap and a foot stomp) to the frankly implausible (a *Splinter Cell*-style headlock-snap).

BETTER OFF DEAD: A simple pipe to the shin and one in the back of the head's good enough for early mooks...

VELVET REVOLVER: But later you'll want to try a bit of [illegible] followed by one in the cranium.

URN THE OTHER CHEEK: For [illegible] message-sending', you can't beat slinging a man into a furnace.



CHERYL BAKER: "Gimme 17 Chelsea buns, eight jam doughnuts and an apple turnover – the Don is planning a light snack."

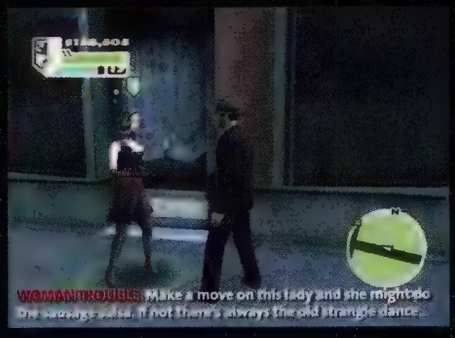
FREDO ALIVE: The cut-scenes really do look absolutely bloody terrific. Look. Fredo. Brilliant.

you can't do the wall-shuffle on walls with few panels or on flights of stairs – the lock-on system works fine and it's all good, clean fun. The driving's a touch behind *GTA*, but a step ahead of *The Getaway*: good handbrake turns, quite fast and with awful, inexplicable AI (the best way to lose pursuing cars is to drive paint-scrapingly close to oncoming traffic, because enemies will always try to come up on your wings as if they somehow don't notice that they're going to get in a horrendous head-on collision). But it works. Just.

DRIVING YOU MAD

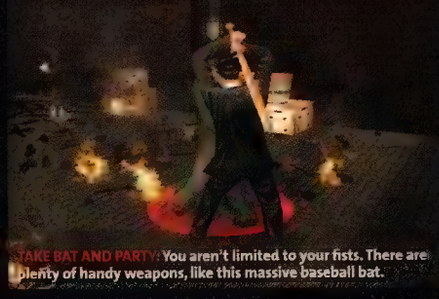
Ironically, then, it's actually EA's faithfulness to the film that ultimately knackers *The Godfather*. Consider: where other driving games at least try to twiddle with the formula, introducing missions where you have to drive deliberately recklessly, do drive-by shootings or get a go on a motorbike, *The Godfather*'s missions break down into exactly three types – escorts, getaways and the always-enjoyable 'driving somewhere'. Thanks to the face-to-face nature of the Mafia, the third type occupies about 60% of your playing time – often, you'll be told to drive to meet someone at a hotel, only for him to tell you to drive across town to the Corleone compound and meet Tom, who'll *then* tell you to drive back to where you originally were and hit somebody with a bat. If only they could, say, ring you, eh? *GTA* gets away with this sort of thing – and *GTA* does it a lot less – because driving's a pleasure in itself, leaving you piloting a massive, throbbing bike through streets full of chirpy rollerbladers and California sunshine with Blondie on the stereo. Here, New York's just a symphony of brown and grey, with the same dirge-like trumpet playing all the time and generic pedestrians, and driving through it feels like actual *work*. After the excitement of intimidating people wears off, you're left with an entire game of driving and shooting, interspersed with bits that don't work properly (awful stealth sections and an absolutely *shocking* dancey-flirty minigame). The one saving grace is the restart system – in typical EA style, there's a checkpoint every twenty seconds, so you're never shoved far back after dying – but that's hardly enough to merit a ringing endorsement. We can just about forgive converting *The Godfather*'s understated feel and brooding menace into a wham-bam bang-'em-up, but as for it not being much fun, that's a crime. Poor old EA. Respect -1000. **Joel Snape**

■ *The Godfather is out March 21st.*



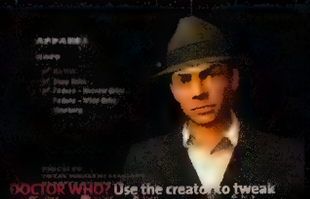
WOMAN TROUBLE: Make a move on this lady and she might do the [illegible] else. If not there's always the old strangle dance...

"IRONICALLY, IT'S EA'S FAITHFULNESS TO THE MOVIE THAT ULTIMATELY KNACKERS THE GODFATHER"



TAKE BAT AND PARTY: You aren't limited to your fists. There are plenty of handy weapons, like this massive baseball bat.

URBAN WARFARE: Shoot outs are to be avoided. They're fun... but then you die.



DOCTOR WHO? Use the creator to tweak your in-game (non movie star) likeness.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Many ways to bash a man's face on a wall. – Too much dull driving, not enough variety.	+ Virtual Brando's a flawless likeness. – Were grey and brown the 50s' only colours?	+ It's Brando! And several other men. – Little variation in pedestrian speech.

LIFESPAN

Well, it's a sturdy 11 hours unless you really want to extort every business in town. And, unfortunately, you probably won't.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN... TRUE CRIME

IT'S WORSE THAN... GTA: SAN ANDREAS

As a film license it's difficult to see how *The Godfather* could have worked better than this. But as a free roaming crime game it's still playing second fiddle.

7.5

PlayStation.2

SOME PETS WILL DO ANYTHING FOR ATTENTION

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The Journey of the Cursed King

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www.dragonquest.eu.com

Why is it that you barely notice your cat these days?

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A huge new world is yours to explore - once you enter nothing else matters, not even your cat.

12+ www.pegi.info

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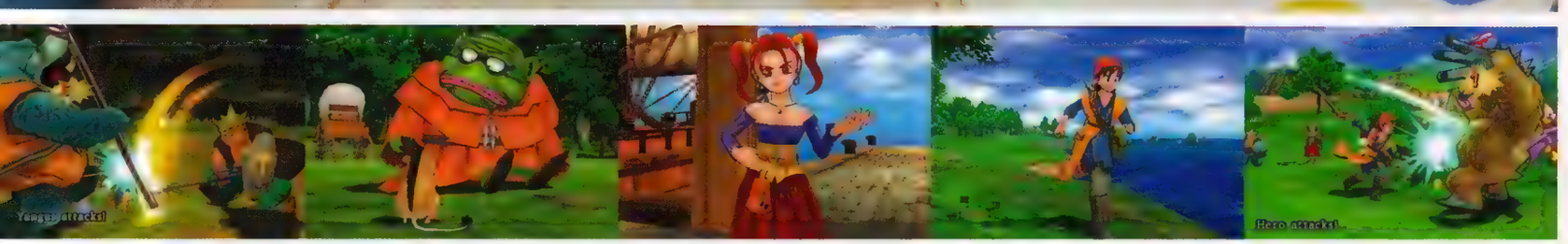


SQUARE ENIX®

"COME ON EILEEN BLARES IN THE BACKGROUND"
NAMCO MUSEUM: 50TH ANNIVERSARY PAGE 74

Reviews

PLAYED TO DESTRUCTION BY PS2 EXPERTS

48 ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS
We didn't think anything could better *Onimusha 3* – and we were right! Oh, wait – that's a bad thing. Bum.

54 ROGUE GALAXY
How good are RPGs at the moment? Imagine a massive comfy bed made entirely of marshmallows. Got that? This is better.

64 25 TO LIFE
To paraphrase the old gag – "Take my *25 To Life*... please!" It's another urban crime game. How about a bourbon crime game? Y'know. For a change?

You want more?!
There's loads! There's *Drakengard 2* (58), *Trapt* (72) *Zathura* (73) *Ape Escape 3* (74) and – the biggie – *Friends: The One With All The Trivia!* (73) We were on a break, etc! Hoo!

WELCOME

This, people, is a moment to remember – it's the Easter glut of big releases (which will continue into next month with *Tomb Raider Legend* and *Hitman: Blood Money*), but after that, well, it'll be time for the summer drought. Followed by the first tentative steps from the newborn PS3. And then come Christmas you might even be able to buy one (in Japan, at least) and PS2 will be, if not retired exactly, living the gaming existence of the pensioner who takes a occasional work in the post office "to pass the time".

So make the most of PS2's golden years. And while *Godfather* and *Driver* aren't among the most incredible experiences of all time, dig a little deeper and there are still gems aplenty – especially for RPG fans, who can launch themselves headlong into the worlds of *Rogue Galaxy* and *Kingdom Hearts 2*, and only really need to emerge when the next *Final Fantasy* deigns to make an appearance. And please buy *OutRun: Coast 2 Coast*. No modding. No stats. No bloody gang challenges via SMS. Ah, bliss.

And finally – good PSP games! At last! Admittedly, they're all ports of existing titles (*Katamari*, *OutRun* and *Fight Night*), which is massively far from ideal, but they're great fun.

There's plenty to be happy about. Make sure you don't miss a moment of the action.

AWARDS

If you see one of these fellas on a review, you know your luck is most definitely 'in'...

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 70. A thoroughly enjoyable, solid game and no mistake.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 80. A top quality, cracking game is guaranteed.

PSM2 GOLD AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 90. Reserved for true classics – don't expect to see many of these.

PSM2 GAME OF THE MONTH
The best game in the issue. If you're getting only one game this month, get this!

PSM2'S SCORING SYSTEM

PSM2 is 100% editorially independent and we mark hard, but fair. We know you want buying advice you can trust and that's why when you see a game with a good score from PSM2 on the box, you can guarantee it's going to be worth the price. Marked precisely out of 100 rather than "three stars out of five", here's what those scores mean:

0-29	Shoddy nonsense. If you see a game with a score below 30, move away from the shelf.
30-49	Maybe some fun to be had but the gameplay and design are sure to be seriously flawed.
50-69	No major faults. This is fine for die-hard fans of the genre or if you spot it going cheap.
70-84	Now we're talking. An entertaining game that only just misses out on being special.
85-89	Get your wallet out! A game in this tight scoring band will be a near-classic.
90+	Unmissable. Essential. Superb. Classic. If you're a real gamer, you will need this game.

34

THE GODFATHER

It's finally here, but is *The Godfather: The Game* really the Don of crime sims?

WS

44

DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

It's a double helping of free-roaming crime this month. *Godfather* keeps it old school but *DPL* is bang on the money.

FIFA STREET 2

FORD STREET RACING

"GAROTTE PEOPLE AS THEY PISS AND THEN WEAR THEIR SODDEN UNIFORMS"

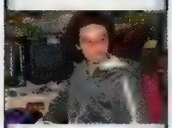
COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE, PAGE 68

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIORS: 10 HAMMERS

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

DANIEL GRIFFITTHS
This month, Dan G became Don Griffiths and proclaimed that he'd perform any 'favours' we asked of him if we paid him the necessary level of respect. And made the tea. All month.

DANIEL DAWKINS
Surprised that Dan G had turned PSM2 into a Bath-wide crime syndicate, Dan asked Don Griffiths to "come to your senses, man!" Next day, he woke with a head in his bed. Of cabbage.



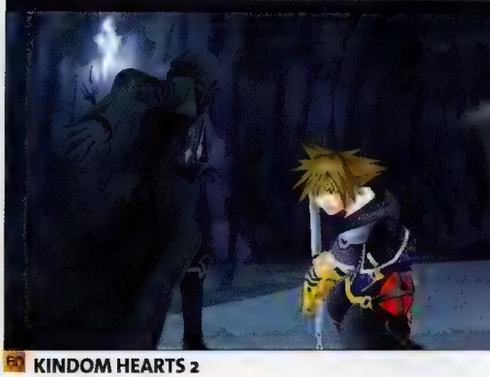
NATHAN IRVINE
Nate likes cards, and begged Don G to rig his next massively bent cribbage night. He was handed a green veg. "Cribbage?" said the Don. "I thought you said 'cabbage'."

ANDREW KELLY
Andy went on hols to Miami this month. "Don G, can you get me some cheap luggage for my trip?" The Don gave him yet more veg. "I thought you said 'cabbage'." he said. Hmm.

DAVID COOK
"Don G," said Dave. "I was wondering if you could help me out with my crossword. There's a question about Charles Babbage, the inventor of the computer and... Ah. Cabbage. Thanks."

JOEL SNAPE
Enough was enough. Joel asked "Don G, why are you surrounded by cabbages?" He replied "The magazine doesn't write itself y'know". Smartass.

PS2 REVIEWS THIS ISSUE



KINDOM HEARTS 2

GAMES

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DVDS

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THE TRUTH

Every game ever reviewed pg94

SanDisk
PSM2 use only Sandisk Memory Stick Pro Duo cards in their PSPs.

U.S.Robotics
PSM2 plays online wirelessly with US Robotics hardware

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Reflections
Publisher: Atari
Players: 1
Memory Save: 144kb
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: Yes

PREVIOUSLY IN PSM2...
"ONE HURDLE REMAINS: PRODUCING A LIST OF WELL-DESIGNED MISSIONS."
PSM2#71

GAMEFAX
Action/Adventure
Driving
Hard
GTA copy

TRIVBURST
- One city (New York).
- (Whisper it...) Two time periods.
- Hundreds of vehicles.
- 14 different weapons.
- Over 30 missions.

"A DRIVER THAT DOESN'T FLUFF ITS LINES. BY HAVING LESS TO SAY"

DRIVER PARALLEL LINES

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

Driver returns, fixed up and ready to ice the competition. Good job that doesn't include *San Andreas* then eh?...

We'd love to write a book about what happened to *Driv3r*. It's an amazing story. Full of intrigue, mystery and misunderstanding. Where nail-biting, gun-point pressure meant that in-game promises could not be met and what at one stage looked like the world's ultimate game instead appeared as the most amazing technical demo ever to sell for £40.

And right now we'd love to write the "*Driver* is back!" story. About how the new game destroys all memories of the flawed third. But while this would make compulsive reading it would be a work of fiction. All the ingredients are there (we lost count of the ways in which *DPL* fixes the irritating game-crimes of *D3*) we're left with a game that while 'good' simply can't be considered in the same breath as *GTA: San Andreas*. Or *Vice City*. Or *GTA3*. Hmm.

What *DPL* does, and does very well, is concentrate on what it knows. Gone are ambitious three-city jaunts. Likewise gone are plots that make no sense, populated by characters that look identical (ie, like a potato). And gone are most of the on-foot bits, replaced with gameplay and difficulty so driving-centric that you're an idiot if you ever get out of the car. Here we have one city, one likeable hero and a story that (while a total rip off of Kill Bill) at least keeps you playing. In fact it's a shame that Atari ruined it by giving away the twist at preview stage, so if you're still in the dark we implore you to skip the following sentence: SPOILER ALERT! (The game is set in 1970s and 2000s New York – you play the first half as a young punk, the second half out for revenge on the gang that put you away for 20 years). SPOILER END! You'll enjoy the game much more not knowing that. Remember, Konami made us play as Raiden in *MGS2*. Come on Atari, have some class.

So we've 30-odd missions and a vast

TOP 5 DRIVERS

- Michael Schumacher
- Vicky B Henderson
- Parker (Thunderbirds)
- Ryan O Neil
- Tiger Woods

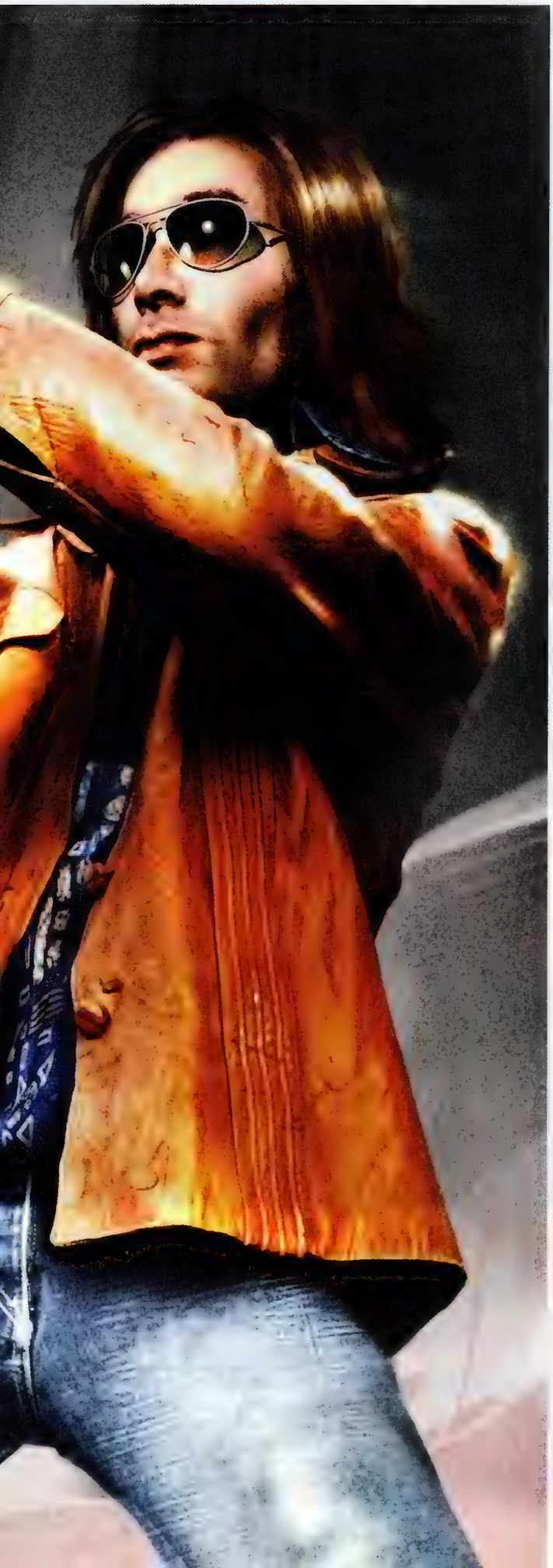
GAMEPIE

50% Driving to missions.
5% Wondering what you're doing.
20% Trying to lose cops.
10% Building a garage.
15% Killing pedestrians by accident.

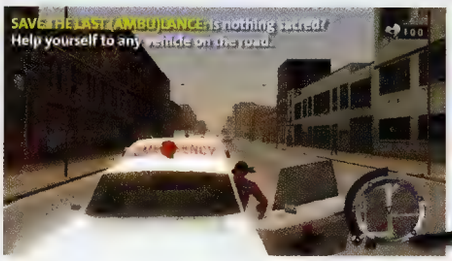
PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.

"New York first appeared as a city in *Driver 2* on PSone, so the team were able to re-use some of the materials they gathered on their first fact-finding mission way back in 2000. That said the *Driver 2* NY was a bit of a rush job, being the last city in the game.



PAVE-MENTAL: Yes, you can murder pedestrians if you want (though each third results in a slight loss of speed).



SAVE THE LAST AMBULANCE: Is nothing sacred? Help yourself to any vehicle on the road.

DRIV3R VS DRIVER PARALLEL LINES

***Driv3r* irritated then impressed alternately every ten seconds. Driver '4' is thankfully a much more even and predictable business. So how do they compare?**

DRIVER 3 WAS:

- Big budget
- Rushed
- Littered with 'famous' voice over artists
- The subject of a promotional live action movie
- Three cities
- Full of poor missions
- Technically ambitious
- Beaten by *Vice City*

DRIVER 4 IS:

- Big budget
- Polished
- Totally fame free
- Given a sensible advertising campaign
- One city
- Some great, mostly good missions
- Technically ambitious
- Beaten by *San Andreas*

(and we mean almost too big) constantly streaming gameworld in which to 'do' them. Local hoods send you on errands, picking up cash, delivering robbers to safety and the city is peppered with interesting sub-missions to lose your way in. There are races to win (including an entire, well planned out racing track league), stunts to pull off and (our favourite) an on-going vendetta against a hapless donut-seller who calls every cop in the city every time you smash a car through his donut cart: "Dooooonuts! Get Y... SMASH-O!!!!" And you've got to do these side missions in order to earn cash. Yes cash, and there's as much – if not more – reason to earn it here as any *GTA* game. While *GTA: SA's* car mods were largely cosmetic (save the clumsy nitro), *DPL* lets you customise your car to levels seen in the likes of *NFS: Most Wanted* – and genuinely feel the difference when you're out on the road.

HIT THE ROAD

Any car is jackable (of course) and 'Hard'-labelled missions become much more do-able with a

"A 'GOOD' GAME, BUT CAN'T BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME BREATH AS SAN ANDREAS"

HAT'S YOUR LOT: Get out of the car and go for a stroll. The city is teaming with life.

greater turn of speed than Average Joe's genero-motor can deliver. Take a car to your garage and you can make use of a healthy set of upgrade options, that let you trade your dough for better handling, power and improved looks too. Yup, you won't be able to resist blowing an extra $100 on that custom paint job to reward your pet car for getting you through that last ball-ache mission. And should you be forced to leave your ride (be it through untimely wreckage or simply to trade hot

The MON£¥ $HOT

It's not only littered with cars but guns too, everything from your basic infinite ammo revolver right through to the RPG rocket launcher. And the brilliant blow-apart physics from *Drivgr* are back in force.

CHOPPER LOAD OF THIS: Nice bike, I'll take it. The choppers and sports bikes are fast but prone to crashing.

"YOU'LL LOSE TRACK OF THE STORY DUE TO THE 20 MIN GRIND OF CROSSING TOWN"

wheels for a cop-dodging low profile model – see later) it's magically transported back to the garage for the next time you call in.

Soon we were taking old favourites out on jobs and even selecting from our stable depending on the job in hand. It's flexibility like this that puts memories of old rigid *Driver* 'do or die' games way off in the distance. Which, unfortunately, is where most of your missions are. *DPL* is hell-bent on making you drive from one side of the map to the other, to the extent that you'll often lose track of the story thanks to the sheer twenty-minute grind of getting across town. The traffic recreation is very accurate, but so accurate that unless you're

SQUARE DEAL: All the New York landmarks are in there, including a beautiful neon lit Times Square. Don't remember those Atari ads in the real thing though.

prepared to mount the pavement and kill, kill and kill again you'll be driving pretty much like you do in real New York – slowly. Good job the clever waypoint system on the in-game map let's you keep on target (drop a pin in the map and it appears as a green arrow to follow in-game) or we'd be reaching for the NY A-to-Z. Nevertheless, upon arriving at some missions (perhaps after undertaking a couple of fun sub-missions and inadvertently engaging in a couple of cop chases en-route), you won't have the faintest memory as to why you're now being asked to chase a drug-dropping helicopter on a motorbike (in one of the most tedious, complex, confusing and unsatisfying missions we've ever played).

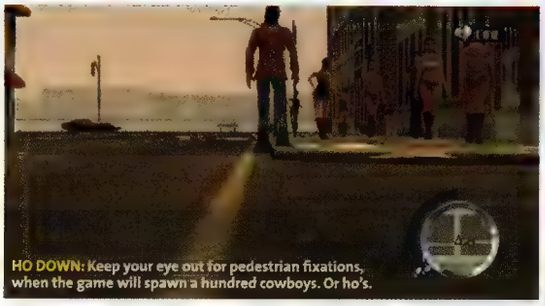
DEATH OF THE DIRECTOR

Previously much was made of the *Driver* game's Director Mode – arguably its best feature – a complex replay camera that allowed you to cut together footage to make your very own car chase movie. The good news? *Driver PL* looks great and the slo-mo camera (press ↓ on the D-pad) while useless, certainly looks flash. The bad news? They've totally scrapped the Director Mode from the new game. The good news (again)? This has allowed the developers to take the same shortcuts that every other game takes resulting in better looks and better frame rates all round. See? A happy ending.

DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT: Want to impress your mates? Drop the camera when a quick pass-by

TRAFFIC VIOLATOR: Got absolutely time you want to get out of the car and take on the cops? It's your funeral.

LAMBO SELECTOR: If you can find this car (we did – once) then you're served a real advantage.



HO DOWN: Keep your eye out for pedestrian fixations, when the game will spawn a hundred cowboys. Or ho's.

But at least *DPL* finally gives you freedom to have fun with the game's brain rather than be smacked with a 'Mission Failed' at the first wrong move. Most dire situations are 'get-outable' and you can hit SELECT to instantly be taken to the last checkpoint with none of the hair-tearing loading and waiting that plagued *Driv3r*.

We'd love to see what Reflections could come up with if they didn't have such an easy get-out; if they were forced (doubtless kicking and screaming) to really take *GTA* head on. Technology-wise they're up for the fight, but when it comes to game design (and we're talking about Rockstar-style game design that injects 'fun' and 'possibility' into *everything*) they're still swotting for the exam.

"YOU NEVER ESCAPE THE FEELING THIS IS A SERIES OF MINI-GAMES IN A BIG CITY"

So everything is in place. They can make great cities, program realistic traffic and get the handling of '70s muscle cars *just right* but why is it that *Driver* games never hang together like a game should? You never escape the feeling that this is just a collection of mini games in a big, big city. New excitement could have come in the shape of improved on-foot missions, but rather than fix the problem they've dodged it. In-car targets are more shootable. Bullets more resistible. And scenery and variety come and go much faster at 90mph... *GTA* is a third-person action game that's so big you need cars to get from one side to the other. Meanwhile, *Driver* just pops on its blinkers and refuses to play the same game.

Driver Parallel Lines IS the best way to get *GTA* style thrills from your PS2 short of wiping your mind and playing *Vice City* and *San Andreas* again. Problem is *Liberty City stories* is coming to PS2 and that's perhaps where *DPL's* biggest problem lies: You'll always have played, or be about to play, a better game.

But let's enter the *Parallel* universe where *GTA* never happened. *True Crime* and *LA Rush*? They're *Chase HQ* and *London Racer* compared to *DPL*. But *San Andreas*...? Guess that really is a different game after all. **Daniel Griffiths**

■ **Driver Parallel Lines** *is out on March 17th.*

ODE TO THE LOST MIURA

[redacted] stunning sight... Lamborghini Miura... look-alike that we discovered one day in Manhattan. We spotted this beast cruising towards us and a quick turn and a car-jack later it was ours. It was fast, it was real fast. Suddenly we were racking up flawless victories at the free events. The ability to outrun the [redacted] and a new toy [redacted] to spend every cent upgrading, repairing and tweaking to the dominant perfection. Now comes the hard bit. [redacted] How many times have we seen it smoke? When it has come apart. What were the odds of [redacted] such a game-beating beauty in all that traffic? All we had to do was get it back to our garage and save the game we were thinking as we shot a red light in full view of a cop car. Damn it, we were in a chase. Maybe the tunnel wasn't the best route to Brooklyn? And just whose idea was it to drive into the on-coming traffic? Since to say that with a few hundred yards to go we nudged the back of the car in front and our mangled, smoking Miura finally gave up the ghost. We could have wept. We went back to Manhattan and scoured the streets looking for another. We spent an hour on foot in Times Square, [redacted] every passing car trying to make it out. But we never found one again. Just writing about it still hurts like losing a misplaced, half-eaten biscuit. It's the most emotional we've felt in a game for ages. So does this make *Driver: Parallel Lines* genius or a massive pain in the arse? You decide.

METER ON THE BRINK

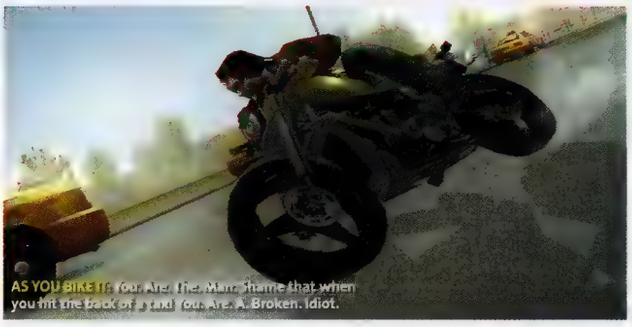
We love this bit. There are separate crime meters for your car and your person. The first winds around the speedo in the bottom left of the screen, the second is around the mini-map on the bottom right. This means that as you wreck traffic, kill pedestrians or generally do stuff with the fuzz watching the 'car' bar will increase. Hit the top and the dreaded police helicopter will open fire (best find a tunnel, quick). Alternatively, get out of the car and it's the 'on foot' bar that suffers due to your violence. This means that it's possible to be in a red hot car then, before the police turn the corner, get out and continue on foot. They've seen the car but not you. Leaving you to amble away from the scene of the crime. Likewise if you can get your 'hot' body into a ride without the cops seeing you can more often than not escape unnoticed – provided the cops don't get too close to spot you at the wheel.

The result is that you play them off against each other. Ditch hot cars and get into rides to keep the cops guessing. Problem comes when you're red hot from an on-foot shooting and the cops are right on your bumper. We'll leave that one for you to figure out.

HOT IN THE CITY: [redacted] your gun and take a few potshots. [redacted]

JACK-ET REQUIRED: Quick. Get in a car... In full view of the cops. [redacted]

COOL CUSTOMER: Provided the cops don't get too close to see [redacted]



AS YOU BIKE IT: You. Are. The. Man. Shame that when you hit the back of a taxi you. Are. A. Broken. Idiot.

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Big, hard and packed with toybox action. – Missions feel disjointed. Too much city plodding.	+ Right up there with the best. Great FX. – Some slowdown in extreme situations.	+ Cracking soundtrack full of original artists. – Police radio chatter repetitive and random.

LIFESPAN

There's 20 hours worth of mission-based action, but the chances are you'll double that by getting side-tracked on the way to the job.

LIFESPAN

IT'S BETTER THAN...

LA RUSH

IT'S WORSE THAN...

GTA: SAN ANDREAS

Where *San Andreas* has size, variety and freedom, *DPL* has size, physics and handling. The mission design prevents the content from truly impressing.

79

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: In-house
Publisher: Capcom
Players: 1
Memory Save: 433kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
A lot of these character names seem familiar...

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The first *Onimusha* game was the first million-seller on PS2."

GAMEFAX
Sequel
Action
Robots
Hard

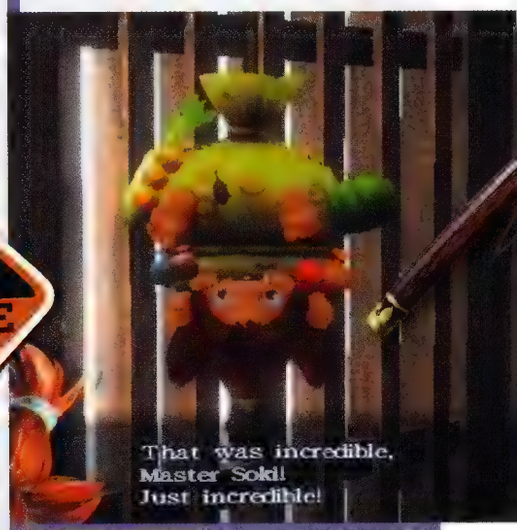
TRIVBURST
- Five controllable characters with their own unique weapons including guns, swords, spears and more.
- Customize your characters by collecting experience points and enemies' souls.

The MON£¥ $HOT
Mercifully, the combat is identical to the previous games, but with a few nice twists. Fighting demons rarely gets tiresome thanks to the smooth, responsive controls.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

THE HANGING CABBAGE BABY

Look at it. Just... *look at it*. This is Minokichi, Soki's... er, friend? We don't really know to be honest, but she hangs in his house, dishing out advice and can give you detailed information on any of the game's characters/enemies/environments. We think she's related to the old hanging man (remember him?) in other *Onimusha* games. It's probably some kind of Japanese in-joke. Whatever it is, it makes us feel peculiar.



BABY, YOU'RE A RICH MAN: The hanging cabbage baby can dish out advice on how to defeat enemies. Handy, but horrifying.

"SWEET DREAMS ARE'NT MADE OF THIS"

ONIMUSHA DAWN OF DREAMS

Dawn Of Dreams? Prepare yourself to have those dreams cruelly shattered, then...

What were you expecting? Another epic on a par with *Demon Siege*? Well, forget that. That doesn't mean it's a bad game, though – all it means is that, compared to the last three games, *Dawn Of Dreams* feels depressingly lightweight. It's like when they make a TV series of a big-budget Hollywood film – it's always noticably cheaper and nowhere near as entertaining as the original source material. *Dawn Of Dreams* is the Young Indiana Jones Chronicles to *Onimusha 3*'s Raiders Of The Lost Ark.

The CG intro, however, is a real spectacle. Hero Soki saves a little girl from a horde of Genma and destroys a *giant samurai robot*. Then, amazingly, five minutes into the game you're fighting it in real-time. OK, so it's nowhere near as jaw-dropping as in the FMV, but it's so overblown and chaotic that you really don't care. Capcom have been playing *God Of War*, clearly.

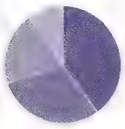
But then it all goes downhill. This chaotic, exaggerated opening is followed by a downward slide into tedium. You go from tearing into vast robots to plodding around a temple solving boring, outmoded *Resident Evil*-style puzzles. We spent an *hour* carrying magical stones back and forth between statues to open doors, all the while being hounded by respawning enemies.

It stinks of imbalance. *Onimusha 3* was a near-flawless, painstakingly-playtested masterpiece. *Dawn Of Dreams*, on the other hand, feels rushed, hastily cobbled-together and fractured. As a result, it's often abnormally difficult. The placement of recovery items is irritatingly sporadic, bosses are needlessly harsh and some enemies take an age to destroy.

The game revolves around a central hub (your headquarters) where you can upgrade your weapons, combine items, buy things and chat to your party. There are five characters to control, all with their own skills, and as you

TOP 5 FEVER DREAMS

- Having a magnet for a face.
- A duck playing the trombone.
- Giant screaming faces.
- Getting lost inside a giant shoe.
- Going to school in your pyjamas.



GAMEPIE

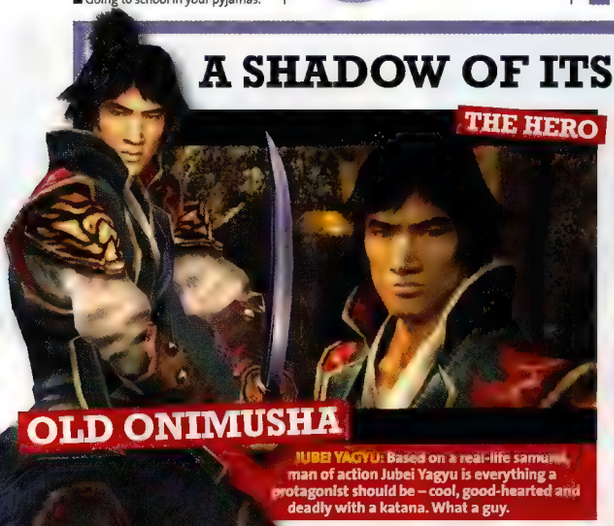
40% Stabbing
30% Sucking
20% Dying
10% Crying

ANSWER

Then you must study ancient Japanese history, because everyone in *Onimusha* is based on historical figures.

A SHADOW OF ITS FORMER SELF

Dawn Of Dreams **doesn't feel like *Onimusha*. The developers say they're trying to make the game more accessible, but they seem to have confused 'accessible' with 'less good'.**



OLD ONIMUSHA

THE HERO

JUBEI YAGYU: Based on a real-life samurai, man of action Jubei Yagyu is everything a protagonist should be – cool, good-hearted and deadly with a katana. What a guy.

THE LEVELS

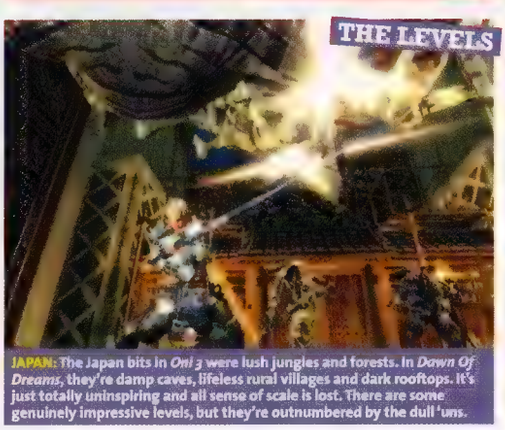
PARIS, FRANCE: Traipsing around Paris in the midst of a full-on Genma assault. There's chaos on a massive scale, things are exploding everywhere and we're climbing the Eiffel Tower, which has become a makeshift 'demon antenna'. Brilliant.

THE MUSIC

EPIC ORCHESTRAL SCORE: Accompanying the enthralling storyline and visceral action perfectly, *Onimusha 3*'s overblown score was on par with the best Hollywood films.

THE HERO

SOKI HIDEYASU: A human ham sandwich. This blonde-haired beach bum has all the wit of plastic bollard and half the likeability. A doleful cretin, saved only by his shiny blue armour and dual-swords. We suggest switching the voices to Japanese to save your ears from his whining.



THE LEVELS

JAPAN: The Japan bits in *Oni 3* were lush jungles and forests. In *Dawn Of Dreams*, they're damp caves, lifeless rural villages and dark rooftops. It's just totally uninspiring and all sense of scale is lost. There are some genuinely impressive levels, but they're outnumbered by the dull 'uns.

NEW ONIMUSHA

THE MUSIC

ROCK AND EUROBEAT: A lot of the fighting in *Dawn Of Dreams* is backed by pounding dance music and cheesy J-rock. It sounds totally out of place. Stop ruining *Onimusha*!

unlock them, previously unreachable areas from earlier in the game can be accessed. Jubei, for example, can squeeze into tight spaces that Soki and the others can't. During regular gameplay you can switch characters at any time by pressing R2. For some puzzles changes of character are compulsory for success, but some can get awfully confusing as a switch in one place might affect two things elsewhere, and you may have to flick between your fighters constantly. The puzzles *work*, but they're not as clever as *Onimusha 3*'s time-hopping conundrums. Yes, we keep mentioning *Oni 3*, but it's the series' benchmark.

EAT MY SOUL

As before, you can upgrade your weapons by sucking the souls of felled enemies. Gather up red souls, infuse your sword with them and it'll get more powerful. Same goes for your armour. But this time you can upload your characters themselves, which is a nice touch. You gain experience points during gameplay and levelling up gives you access to skill points, which can be spent on improving your evasive skills, defence, attack power, soul-sucking speed and dozens of other factors that make your character stronger.

FRAUD OF WAR: The *God Of War* influence is clear. Which is fair really, as *GoW* stole from *Onimusha*.

souls between characters. Simply piling everything into Soki's swords simply won't cut it (literally), as the other characters will then be far too weak to be of any use. It's all about stat management – and to think they said they were trying to broaden the appeal of the series.

"ONI 3 WAS A MASTERPIECE. DAWN OF DREAMS FEELS RUSHED AND FRACTURED"

This does mean that in order to beat some of the later bosses, you may have to do the old trick of entering and re-entering a room, killing the enemies, collecting experience, upgrading and repeating. Doing this makes things way easier. It can also get frustrating, trying to spread gathered

A nice feature lets you order your AI counterparts around with the D-pad. You can tell them to hang back and defend, distract the enemy, follow your lead or go off on their own killing spree. This should be brilliant, but thanks to some abysmal AI, they spend most of their time lying on

their backs, dead. They'll charge haphazardly into swarms of enemies, forgetting to block attacks and loll around like fools. Sometimes it's helpful, but most of the time you'll just ignore them and go off on your own. A wasted opportunity.

Dawn Of Dreams is a disappointment. A big fat one. We didn't expect it be as good as *Onimusha 3*, but it's actually the worst game of the series. The good ideas feel like a taster for the next 'proper' game (on next-gen hopefully) – and everything else is a slap-dash recycling of old stuff. It's not bad, as such, but any *Onimusha* should be much, much more than that. **Andy Kelly**

■ *Dawn Of Dreams* is out now.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ The combat is, typically, excellent. – It's too hard and feels unbalanced.	+ Good character design and environments. – The levels are small, and often quite boring.	+ The music can be good sometimes... – ...but can also be completely awful.

LIFESPAN

You can plough through it in the usual 12 hours. Otherwise, we can't really see any reason to play through it again.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
NANO BREAKER

IT'S WORSE THAN...
ONIMUSHA 3

Fundamentally decent, but it's still the poorest full-size *Onimusha* game yet. It's hard, but it's also unyielding and sometimes a bit dull. So be wary.

7

INFOSTRIP DETAILS
Developer: EA Big
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 265kb
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...
What is the World Record for keeping the ball off the floor, more commonly known (in the parlance of the street) as 'keepie ups'? <adjusts monocle>

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Britain's best freestyle football player is Billy Wingrove. Er, yes. He's been on Match Of The Day, y'know, and has done loads of global ads."

GAMEFAX
Sport
Sequel
Official License
Stupid

TRIVBURST
- 20 national teams including England, Scotland and Republic of Ireland, but not Wales or Northern Ireland.
- Three-player co-op mode.
- 320 individual players.

street2
The MON£¥ $HOT
Losing 3-2 with seconds to go, you activate the Gamebreaker and volley into the top corner at lightning speed. The score flips, and you're 3-2 up with no time to reply.
PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

GLOVE AFFAIRS ESQUIRE Keepers are erratic, as if the game is 'forcing' goals.

ROLL OUT
400
7475
5 BEATS TO KO!
Score 5 Goals
HEART BREAKER Beat every opposition player during a Gamebreaker and you win instantly.

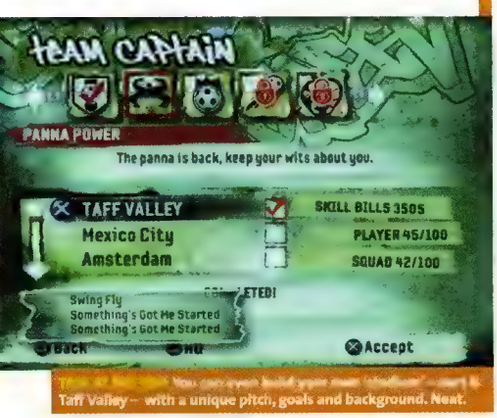
"FORGET SCORING: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MAD SKILLZ, BABY"

FIFA STREET 2

Reverse Panna? Like Dinner? *Ant Music?* EA's improved – but confusing – sequel, might not be up everyone's street.

GOALS ARE BAD

The main game is split into four areas: Kick Abouts, Team Captain, Underground and International. Each is sub-divided into game types, so some matches ask you to score three goals first, others play against a time limit, while some are about hitting points targets – so scoring goals is almost a bad thing. You just need to perform varied tricks, keep the ball up and string together combos. You can also win some games by scoring 'pannas', ie. making your opponent fall over. However, since scoring almost demands that you perform tricks first, the different game types amount to the same thing.



Taff Valley – with a unique pitch, goals and background. Neat.

Playing *FIFA Street 2* is like picking a lock, except you've 200 keys, the clock is ticking and the treasure might be in another room. Despite its bewildering combination of key presses and skill moves, you're never sure how to score a goal, or whether to bother at all. You rarely hit the net unless you've done about three tricks, while some games can be won by ball skills alone. To make things even more complex, other matches can be won by making

'sports entertainment'. Its core controls are a dead-ringer for *NBA Street 3*. As a simple test, if you a) Love *PES5* b) Can remember when Blackburn won the Premier League and c) Aren't entirely comfy with doing a Back 2 Biscuits to earn 800 Skill Bills while rocking to DJ Marky and Bungle's 'No Time 2 Love', then *FIFA Street 2* isn't for you.

MC Harvey has gone, replaced by a 'radio' featuring Grooverider, some Brazilian bloke and – every silver lining has a cloud – Radio 1's Zane Lowe. On the flip side, Harvey was always going to

"FIFA STREET 2 IS THE PINNACLE OF COMMITTEE-LED DESIGN, A TAPESTRY OF MARKET RESEARCH"

men fall over. Confusing? Yes. Rubbish? Not entirely – because while *FS2* yields inconsistent results, the process is invariably entertaining.

One second you're cursing the porridge-like tackling animations, the next praising the fluidity of an overhead kick as you dance around three players and detonate the net like a missile. The key isn't to treat it like football, but basketball. Or

get canned, because *FIFA Street 2* is the pinnacle of committee-led game design – a scientific tapestry of market research designed to look messy and 'real'. The soundtrack flits from Editors to Coldcut to DJ Fresh in a calculated attempt to appeal to people of all ages, tastes and backgrounds.

Ball juggling is the key addition. Hold L1 and your players will do keep-ups, which can be linked

TOP 5 STREETS

- Coronation
- Quality
- Sesame
- Ramsay
- Mean

GAMEPIE

15% Navigating menus.
30% Holding R1.
25% Watching animations
10% Doing keep ups.
20% Pleasant surprise.

ANSWER

A huge 55,187, set by Ronaldo's former wife Milene Domingues, but some Ukrainian chap has kept it up for 24 hours since.

MAKE ME BEAUTIFUL

The Create Player options mirror the game's controls – despite a huge surface variety, the results don't look that different, and are always spectacular. Tweaking the length, width, tip and position of your nose/eyes/mouth doesn't yield very subtle results, but it is possible to create a handsome, Hollywood-cartoon of yourself, or a hideous CGI mutation – there's little in-between. Look at how 'real' our Dep Ed Dan D looks below right. Horrible.

shopping – it's 'fashionable' Wayne Rooney.

FRENCH CONNECTION: You can play as National teams in their regular kits, or – believe it – suits.

KEEPING IT HEEL: You unlock more skill moves as you progress, but they amount to the same thing.

to skill moves (via right-stick twirls), or chained into combos with lofted passes. It's possible to, say, flick the ball over an opponent's head (L2 + right analogue), catch it with keep ups (hold L1), back heel it to a team mate (□), and reverse volley it into the top corner (hold ○) – and that's a 'basic' combo. Combos mean points, and points mean Gamebreakers – a slow motion race against the clock where goals count double (since they take –1 off your opponent). It's even possible to win a game *instantly* if you dribble around three players before scoring. No, we're not joking.

SICK AS A PARROT

And that's the problem – *FIFA Street 2* has little to do with football. Getting yourself in a good position to score (ie. one-on-one with the keeper and aiming for the bottom corner) *sometimes* works, but doing loads of tricks, and thrashing an improbable shot from an acute angle is often as effective, and loose ball first-time shots are almost impossible. Passing the ball around builds combos, but there's little advantage in 'unlocking' teams, since the tricks are so powerful, you can beat anyone, from anywhere. There are hundreds of tricks (using combos of L2/R2 with right analogue directions) but each is equally powerful, save the occasionally self-defeating overhead flicks.

Winning boils down to crude timing (ie. don't ball juggle into an opponent, or pass to their feet), and raw statistics – a powerful player will almost always win a tackle, however poorly timed, against a weaker player while a powerful shooter can score from almost anywhere. While *PES*'s stats are a servant of the precise controls (so a weak player can still slide tackle a quicker brute with timing), *FS2*'s uses stats to dominate its aesthetically varied, but cruder skill set, so lesser players feel equally powerful.

Some matches aren't about goals, but points, so the challenge is knowing which buttons you *haven't* pressed to vary your combo, rather than football.

Still, few games let you dress Wayne Rooney in a pink jacket and show his 'mad skillz' to the Scottish street team, or provide such a cheesy ballet of slick passing moves and blistering shots. It isn't *easy* to score, so goals are always satisfying, even if you can't distil *how* you did it. Crudely, for every move, there's a counter move (the right analogue stick activates tricks *and* tackles), and if you can surrender to its perverse logic, few games offer such obvious thrills. We've still got no love for the streets, but we do have some grudging respect <+10>. **Daniel Dawkins**

■ Fifa Street 2 *is in shops from March 3rd.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Satisfying combos, thrilling shots. – Fudgy tackling, confusing tactics.	+ Slick animation, decent likenesses. – A bit too 'urban' and washed out.	+ The occasional decent tune is in there. – Insincere radio banter, some duff tunes.

LIFESPAN

There are loads of modes, rewards and challenges. It's fundamentally repetitive, however.

MINUTES ——— YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
FIFA STREET

IT'S WORSE THAN...
PES5

FIFA Street 2 **is more a 30-yard screamer than a precision tap-in – often unpredictable and frustrating, but redeemed by flashes of brilliance.**

71

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Razorworks
Publisher: Empire
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 64kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: Yes

GAMEFAX

Official license | Racing | Original | Budget

"FORD GAME"

ONE, TWO, THREE, FORD: There are loads of different motors to race. All Fords, obviously.

FORD STREET RACING

Mustang, Sierra, Escort, Capri, even the Fiesta – they're all here. No Ka, though. Can't imagine why.

It's gridlocked bumper-to-bumper out there, so any game's gonna have to do something special to stand out from the rest of the smog-bound crowd. Calling your game *Ford Street Racing* doesn't exactly fuel confidence, but against the odds this is something more than just another officially licensed racer.

Things seem to be as you'd expect at first – there's a range of championships and challenges, 24 sunny LA based street circuits to razz around and 18 different Fords. Everything looks reasonable and, some floaty handling aside, plays well too, but so far there's a big fat zero on the innovation front.

It's not until you try Team Championship that things get interesting. Here, success is not dependent on getting your car across the finish line in first place, it's about the final positions of your entire team of three. Hitting down on the D-pad lets you switch cars and take control of any team member lagging behind. More importantly, you can also instruct your AI compadrés to block off other racers or order them to let you drift in behind them and use their slipstream.

This really is strategic racing and it works pretty damn well. But things do get a little tired as you're constantly switching back to the car that's lagging behind in order to get them back in the race. Still, if you're looking for a driving game with a difference, this is worthy. **Richard Owen**

■ *Ford Street Racing is out now.*

PSM² VERDICT

A competent racer that stands out from the crowd by means of an interesting team race mode. Worth a look if you fancy a driving game with a difference.

68

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

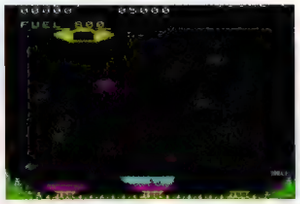
Developer: Taito
Publisher: Empire
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 49kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: No

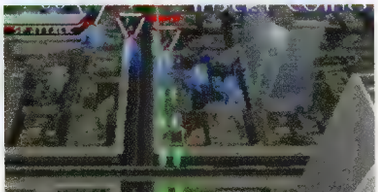
GAMEFAX

Platform | Action | Old-Skool | Beat-em-up

"NOT VERY LEGENDARY"

STUCK IN THE PAST: Some retro packages we can tolerate. This is not one of them. Sigh.





RAY VON: This is *Raystorm* – it was good once. And now it's rubbish.

TAITO LEGENDS 2

Listen very carefully. Can you hear the sound of an ancient arcade barrel being scraped? Painful, isn't it?

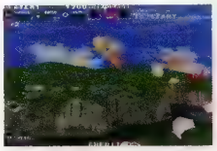
Bargain hunters and retro gamers rejoice! Taito are back with more gaming nuggets from their arcade vault and this time around you get 40 games for your money – ker-ching! The bad news, however, is that the coin-op kings seem to have shot their load a little early with their first offering (although even that was far from stellar) as this second collection definitely fails to measure up.

Unfortunately hardly any of the games on offer here will bring back childhood memories of skiving lessons to hit the local arcade. From the earliest (*Balloon Bomber*, *Crazy Balloon* and *Lunar Rescue* from 1980), through to the most recent (1997's *G Darius* and *Puchi Carat*), most of the games on offer are duff sequels, wannabe clones and curios only of interest to arcade obsessives, many of which didn't even make it to our shores.

But if retro games are your thing, you'll undoubtedly have some fun checking out the mix of beat-em-ups, scrolling shooters, puzzlers and platform games on show. There's plenty of strange Japanese English to amuse too. Check out the cries of 'Gongon' Bogon' or 'Goon' when you floor your opponent in *Violence Fight*, for instance.

Unfortunately *Taito Legends 2* is best summed up with the versions of their most famous game available here. First time around we got *Space Invaders* and its follow-up. Here, however, we're left with *Super Space Invaders '91* and the wacky surrealist nightmare that is *Space Invaders '95* – neither a legend in any way. **Richard Owen**

■ *Taito Legends 2 is out now.*



PSM² VERDICT

While there are 40 titles on offer, this ultimately weak collection of C-list games will excite only the most crazed retro mentalist. Not us, then.

40

DO YOU WANT TO GET DIRTY?

ATV Offroad Fury 3

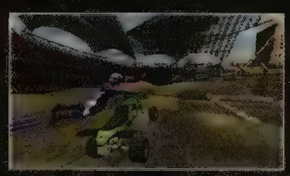
PlayStation 2

Forget boundaries. PlayStation®2 version includes 30 massive, free-roaming environments, 36 unbelievably sick aerial moves, 6 gnarly off-road terrains - it's the ultimate four-wheeled free-for-all.

ATV Offroad Fury Blazin' Trails

PSP™

PlayStation Portable



Rip it up and blaze your own trail in 5 killer single player modes or join others with unbelievable multiplayer modes. PSP™ offers an all new trading card system and 4 new mini-games!

3+

www.pegi.info

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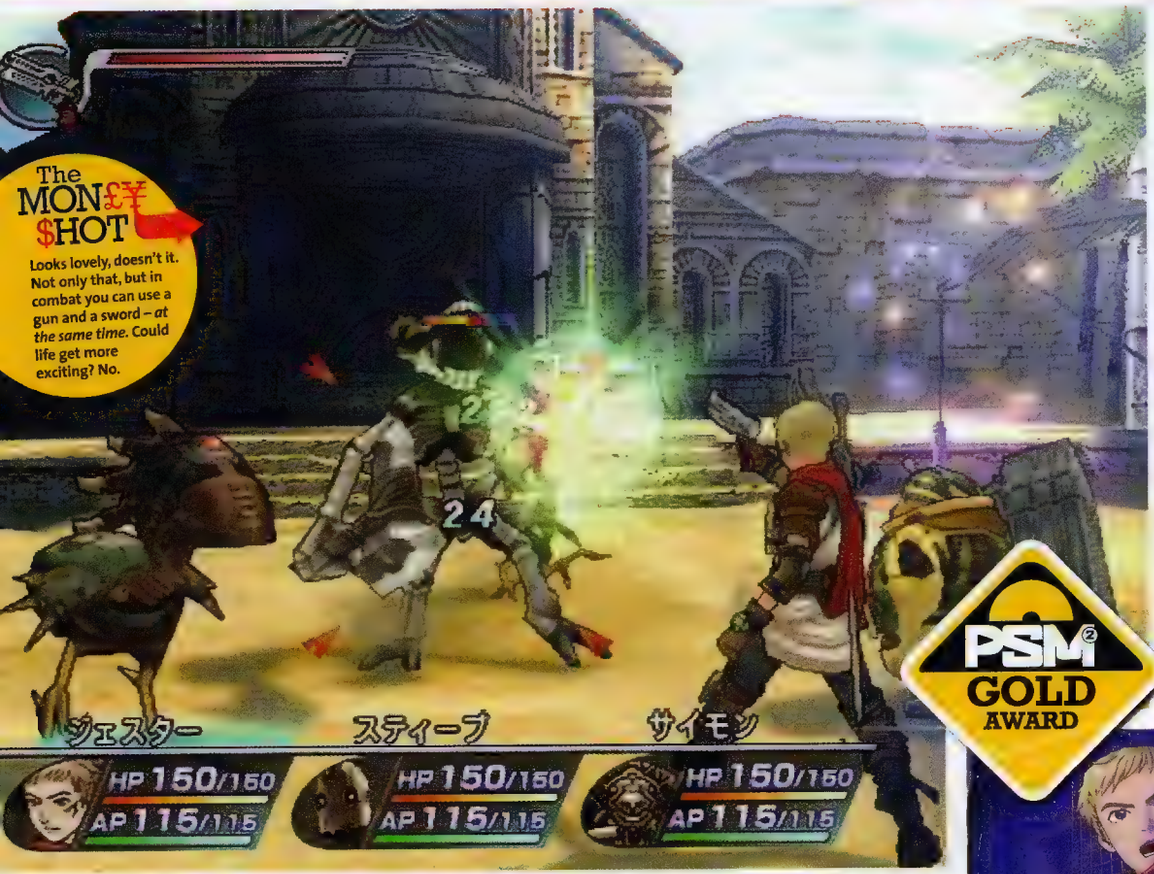
SOUTHPEAK INTERACTIVE

INFOSTRIP DETAILS
Developer: Level 5
Publisher:
Players: 1
Memory Save: 129 kb
Surround Sound:
50/60Hz: Yes
Widescreen: Yes

QUESTION...
Do you ever wonder how many [illegible] our galaxy?

GAMEFAQX

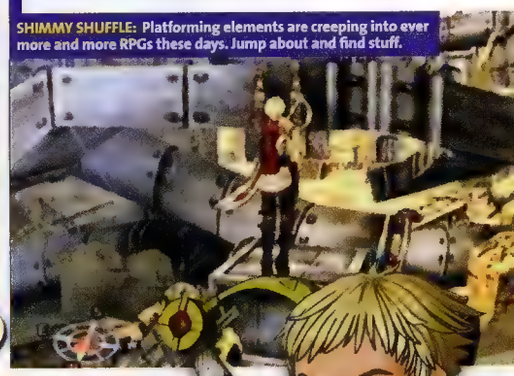
The MON£¥ $HOT
Looks lovely, doesn't it. Not only that, but in combat you can use a gun and a sword – *at the same time*. Could life get more exciting? No.



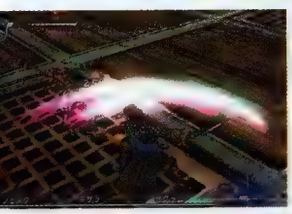
PSM2 GOLD AWARD

JUMP! MIGHT AS WELL JUMP!

Unlike most RPGs, *Rogue Galaxy* isn't all played on the one level – your characters can jump. Yes, we know that doesn't sound that exciting, but really, it's quite a new thing for RPGs. And not only is this a very useful skill in battle when you're up against flying enemies or baddies you can leap onto, but it's also used to get around, which in turn makes the various environments that much bigger. You can get to other areas, find valuable treasures and solve puzzles by climbing and bouncing around until you stumble on new things.



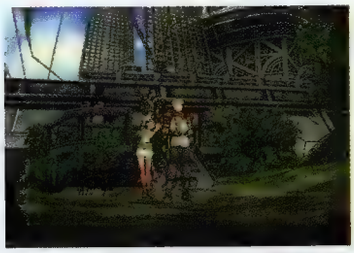
SHIMMY SHUFFLE: Platforming elements are creeping into ever more and more RPGs these days. Jump about and find stuff.

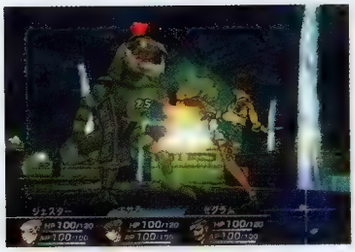


"MUCH BETTER THAN A ROGUE AERO"

ROGUE GALAXY

The only thing better than this storming piracy-based RPG is the following joke: what does a pirate drive? A cah-haaaarrrrrr. [dies]





Aaarrr! Aaaaaaarrrr! We've been practicing being pirates all week. We love pirates – they're ill-tempered, smelly drunkards who steal stuff. Hell, we're already most of the way there. We've never played a bad pirate-themed game (apart from *Legend Of Black Kat*), although you can count the actual amount of piracy games on PS2 on one hand, and most end with the words 'Monkey' and 'Island'. Still, *Rogue Galaxy* is no exception in the quality stakes, and carries on in the great tradition of pirate games, with much exploring and treasure hunting of the swashbucklingest kind.

The spiritual successor in the *Dark Cloud* series, *Rogue Galaxy* is meant to be the third iteration, following *Dark Chronicle*. No trilogy of games show the advancement of PS2 from birth to old age in terms of imagination and sophistication of play like this series does. *Dark Cloud* was a clever, quirky dungeon-trawling RPG with some nifty side quests that came out right at the beginning of PS2's life. It sat ignored on shelves and, much like *Ico*, took years for word of mouth to make itself heard loudly enough to cause some ripples in the world of development. The follow-up, *Dark Chronicle*, was an RPG bursting at the seams with ideas and beautiful cel-shading, and was adored by RPG fans as being utterly consuming and enormous. Since then, RPG fans have waited with bated breath so long for something new from Level 5 that most of them have gone blue around the lips – but now we've been rewarded with both the fantastic *Dragon Quest VIII* (PSM2#71 90%) and now *Dark Chronicle*'s successor *Rogue Galaxy* – and it's everything that's good about RPG gaming.

HIT SQUAD

You could say *Rogue Galaxy* is the greatest hits of RPGing. Level 5 have really done their homework and managed to incorporate every loved element of any RPG of the last five years, and discarded

TRIVBURST
- Travel all over the galaxy
- Create new weapons and guns
- Encounter different characters

DOT.NET
"This site is fab giving new [illegible] by you!" Check out our new fave developer Level 5 at www.level5.co.jp. It's mainly [illegible] but there are [illegible] press, wire and [illegible]

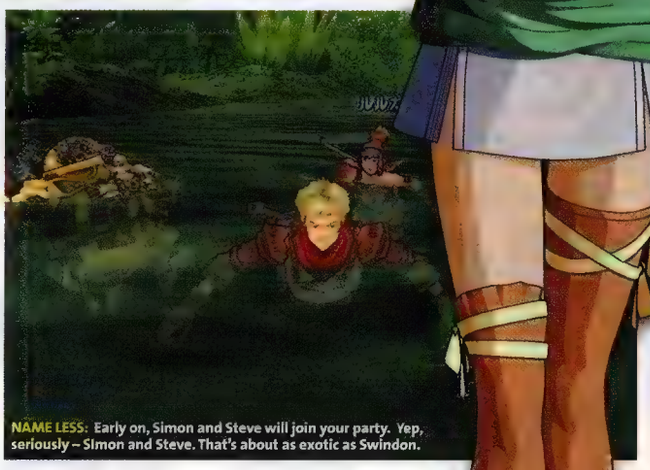
GAMEPIE
30% Swashbuckles
20% Hoisting the mainsheets
35% Shivering timbers
[illegible]

TOP FIVE ROGUES
- Han Solo
- Gambit (Xmen)
- Captain [illegible]
- The Artful Dodger
- [illegible]

ANSWER...
There are roughly one billion stars in the Milky Way. That's almost as many stars as Dave has [illegible]

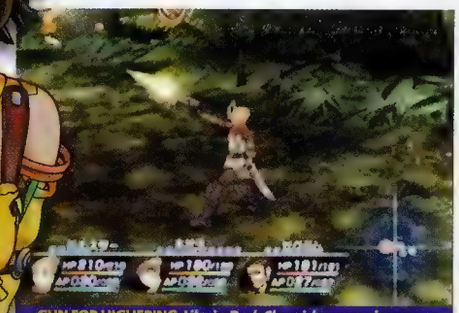
HAIRPG: It's possible to level up your hair in *Rogue Galaxy*. Take that, *San Andreas!* Who's got the most pointless details now, eh?

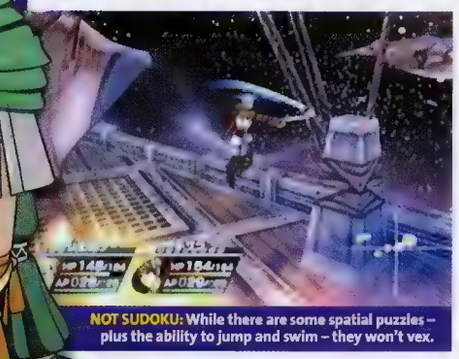
SWIPEOUT: Even though it's real-time, *Galaxy*'s combat is gorgeous in motion.

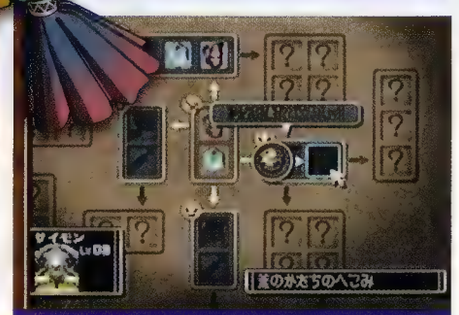

NAME LESS: Early on, Simon and Steve will join your party. Yep, seriously – Simon and Steve. That's about as exotic as Swindon.

GREATEST HITS OF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Many elements from *Rogue Galaxy* have been lifted from other RPGs – and most improved upon – such as the (rather overly complex) sphere grid system from *FFX*, which has been scaled down here to make it easier to understand and use. As well as that, each character has a long range weapon employed in exactly the same way as in *Dark Chronicle* – and just like that game, some of Jester's guns even have special uses outside of battle, such as the ability to freeze water and use it to create platforms. *Rogue Galaxy* may lack new ideas a little, but it does what it does exceptionally well.


GUN FOR HIGHERING: Like in *Dark Chronicle*, ammo is very limited to begin with, so get upgrading as quickly as possible.


NOT SUDOKU: While there are some spatial puzzles – plus the ability to jump and swim – they won't vex.


MENU AT WORK: The menus aren't hard to understand, even when they're in Japanese. The UK version will be even easier.

anything that might have felt a bit bogged down, limiting or overly simplistic. Even the storyline is an old favourite – fair-haired kid with stupid name (in this case Jester Rogue) who lives on dustbowl planet dreams of escaping to the stars. He meets a mysterious guy and a robot and ends up gadding around the galaxy with a hard bitten cool pirate type and a pretty girl with swirly things in her hair.

You'll fight, puzzle and quest your way through half a dozen planets, but you can forget battle screens, turn-based fighting and dodgy party AI. Scraps can start in the middle of towns, with the townspeople disappearing to be replaced by an array of intelligent and varied enemies who you fight with in real time, leaping around using your sword and long-range gun with ease. It's a mad mix of the sort of 'on the fly' party fighting from *Kingdom Hearts*, the weapon handling and stamina gauge from *Star Ocean 3* and the variation of weapons, character abilities and enemy AI of *Dark Chronicle*.

"NO LEAP FORWARD, BUT A HARD TO PUT DOWN VISCERAL EXPERIENCE"

When it comes to character building and weapon development, which is really the life-blood of this series, *Rogue Galaxy* has again adopted all the best elements from other games. There's a simplified Sphere grid type system (a lá *Final Fantasy X*) to learn abilities with and lots of weapon upgrading and combining in an amalgam of the *Dark Chronicle* and *Dragon Quest VIII* systems. And then there's a bunch of side quests, which are a bit like Pokemon but with insects, and also the Hunter points system where you'll climb a league table by defeating certain monsters and fulfilling certain criteria.

The reality is that there is no startling leap forward in gameplay here, but every single element of the game really is an absolute joy to play. The environments are huge, varied and sublime to look at and there's no sense of being led by the nose through a dungeon, with open exploration, towns, shops, people and battling all happening in the same seamless and absolutely massive maps. All RPGs are time-consuming because that's the nature of the beast, but *Rogue Galaxy* is, from the get-go, incredibly hard to put down because it's just such a visceral experience, with every element working just the way you'd want it to. Right we'd best get back to it. Aaaaarrrr... Aaaaaaaarrrrrrrr! Ow, scurvy... Pass the oranges. **Kirsten Kearney**

■ *Rogue Galaxy is available on import now*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ RPG heaven. The perfect balance. – It's by no means a great leap forward.	+ Varied, beautiful cel-shading. – Controlling the camera can be hard in battle.	+ Has J-Pop star Aya Ueto doing a voice-over. – It's rather similar to *Dragon Quest VIII*.

LIFESPAN
There's 60 hours with maybe another 30 in side-quests. The best 100 hours you'll spend on your PS2 this year possibly.
MINUTES

IT'S BETTER THAN...
DARK CLOUD

IT'S WORSE THAN...
DARK CHRONICLE

What a run RPGs are on at the moment – *Dragon Quest VIII*, *Kingdom Hearts 2* and now *Rogue Galaxy*, which just about tops them all. Wondrous and sublime.

91

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 52KB
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...
What outrageous claim did Muhammad Ali make about his speed?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Gentleman Jim" Corbett was the first world champion under the newly-enforced Queensbury rules in 1892. He defeated John L. Sullivan."

GAMEFAX
Sports
Violent
Official License
Realistic

TRIVBURST
- Legendary fighters include Muhammad Ali and Britain's own Ricky 'The Hitman' Hatton.
- Spruced up career mode allows you to form heated rivalries with opponents.

The MON£¥ $HOT
You've pulled back your haymaker hook perfectly, and just delivered a stunning hammer to your opponent's jaw. Brutal. Down he goes, like a big sack of dung.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

"LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE – AGAIN!"

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Dust off your gloves and iron your baggy silk shorts, it's time to step into the ring once again...

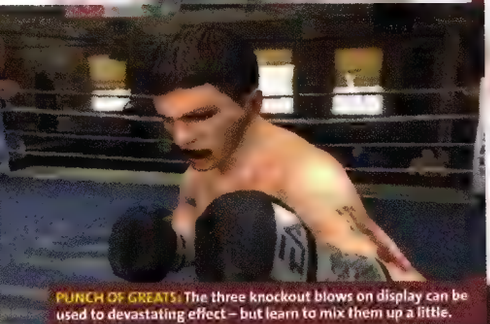
Of late, the limelight around boxing has dimmed somewhat. Up and coming stars, with the exception of British Olympic silver-medallist Amir Khan and seven-foot punch-machine Nikolay Valuev, are few and far between. Fortunately, the only downside in *Fight Night Round 3* is just that problem – there's a distinct lack of new talent. Instead you'll be treading the canvas with old favourites like Ali and Lamotta. But even without a bolstered line-up, EA's pugilistic scrapper still delivers the goods.

Sadly, after being treated to the next-gen experience, we couldn't help but notice that the face-rippling impacts and intricate boxer expressions weren't there. But then again, we're playing it on a machine that's been doing the rounds for six years and the visuals on display really do push PS2 to breaking point. The photo-realistic fighters resemble their meat-sack counterparts to a tee, lightning-quick jabs and combos flow from Sugar Ray Robinson with aplomb, and squat power punchers like Ricky Hatton patrol the ring relentlessly, slamming home hooks with devastating effects. Graphically, the only downer is that opening a gash on your opponent's mug looks more like face paint than claret.

Blood aside, *Fight Night Round 3* flows like no other beat-'em-up. Year on year, the series of slick defensive sways and shattering counter punches is upped and improved, and this instalment follows suit. Take parrying punches for example. Perfectly deflect your foe's haymaker and he'll be open to a few well-placed counter uppercuts as he struggles to regain his composure. You can even clean him out with a single punch if you get it spot on. Also, stringing together rapid combos now plays a more prominent role in deciding a fight. You could be going toe-to-toe with a heavy slugger like Joe Frazier, but Ali's quick flurries can confuse him, as his defensive skills are too slow to avoid the barrage of stinging jabs. It works in

TAKEN OUT TO PUNCH

Any pro boxer will tell you that repeated a knockout blow that worked against one opponent won't necessarily have the same effect on your next foe, and *Fight Night Round 3* enforces that. Unlike last year's outing, you've now several ways to gain the upper-hand in a bout. You've still got a range of thumping haymakers at your disposal, but now you've also got the stun punch. This fires you into an view from your opponent's eyes and allows you to see yourself delivering crushing blows as your rival can only block and parry. Then there's the Flash KO, which drains a fighter's energy instantly, leaving them open to an easy knockdown. But be warned, cranking out a huge punch will leave you vulnerable to being smashed in the mouth if you miss.



PUNCH OF GREATS: The three knockout blows on display can be used to devastating effect – but learn to mix them up a little.

TOP 5 BOXING NICKNAMES

- Ricky 'The Hitman' Hatton
- Ray 'Boom Boom' Mancini
- Oscar 'The Golden Boy' De La Hoya
- Eric 'Butterbean' Esche
- Rocky 'The Italian Stallion' Balboa

GAMEPIE

80% Punching.
10% Weaving like a textile hobbyist. Where are all the new fighters?
5% Blocking and parrying.

ANSWER

That he could "turn off the light and be in bed before the room went dark". Lies.

FACE OFF: The facial expressions really are like nothing you've seen before.

PUNCH BOX: The control system feels as fluid as it ever has.

TRUE GREAT: The Greatest Of All Time can dance around the ring realistically while flashing out jabs.

reverse too. Like if Hatton gets inside a nimble fighter, he can pound the ribs – lifting them off the canvas in the process – and leave them peeing blood for days. Nasty. It's all about working to your chosen boxer's advantages, and that's what keeps *Fight Night Round 3* varied and playable – and this is also reflected in the modified career mode.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T

Unlike the previous round of *Fight Night*, your created fighter now works his way up the contenders ladder by gaining respect. Don't worry, it's not a classic EA 'Yo – Facebuster KO! +100 Respect!' kind of thing. It's based on which fights you take on. The opponent contracts you sign can range from money-spinners with a large fight purse up for grabs to tougher but less well-known boxers who you'll gain respect for whooping, but will earn less cash in doing so. This approach allows you to choose which route you want to follow. There's a handy bar on the career menu to indicate how much respect you've gained and once it's full you can then challenge for a belt or take on a cash-cow opponent so you can buy new gloves, gum shields and the like. You can even form bitter rivalries with some fighters. They'll then want to challenge you at any given moment and are more suspect to chucking in a cheeky elbow or head-butt during the bout. While we're on the subject, showboating boxers can bait illegal attacks as they automatically wind up their arms or cockily beckon opponents.

While *Fight Night Round 3* serves up hammer blows by the shedload, it also adds the glitz and presentation of a World title fight. The commentators not only deliver accurate accounts of the ring action, they also give you little facts about each of the well-known fighters. For example, did you know that middleweight champion Jermain Taylor lost his first amateur fight and was subsequently whooped by his own *mother*? You do now. There's even a selection of multi-angled replays to give you the best view of a crucial knockdown, shamelessly known as the 'Burger King replay-cam'. In fact, barely a fight passes by without some advertising cropping up from the likes of Chrysler. It's just a shame EA didn't use the cash generated from it to purchase more licensed boxers...

"THE BEST FIGHT NIGHT YET, ROUND 3 KNOCKS OUT ALL-COMERS WITH EASE"

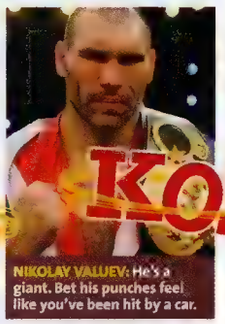
PRIZE FIGHTERS KNOCKED OUT

While we're not complaining about most of the boxers on offer in *Fight Night Round 3*, we can't help but feel a little short-changed, especially in the Heavyweight class. While the lower divisions are swarming with current stars, a measly four out of seven of the top weight stars have made the cut. We've been exhibiting punchy rage with Ali and Frazier forever; surely it's time for the likes of Chris Byrd (IBF champ), Nikolay Valuev (WBA champ) or even Wladimir Klitschko (erm... Vitali's less talented brother) to step into the roster. In fact, with EA's reputation for tying up sports licenses, we're surprised they haven't obtained all the current crop of stars for all divisions. Here's who's missing.

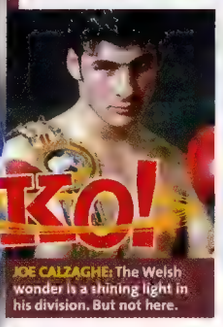
AMIR KHAN: The British Olympic silver-medallist is nowhere near the list. Look how upset he is. We could take him, though.

© Corbis/Rex

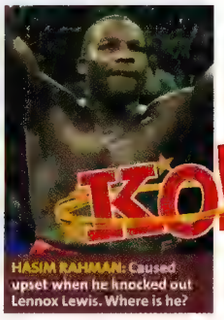
CHRIS BYRD: He's currently itching for an undisputed title shot. Itching *bad*.



NIKOLAY VALUEV: He's a giant. Bet his punches feel like you've been hit by a car.



JOE CALZAGHE: The Welsh wonder is a shining light in his division. But not here.



HASIM RAHMAN: Caused upset when he knocked out Lennox Lewis. Where is he?

But what with the amount of technical show-pieces on display – which makes this the most skill based beat-'em-up around – not to mention a collection of sub-games (including recreating classic bouts between the likes of Ali and Fraizer), *Fight Night Round 3* knocks out all-comers with ease. It's the best *Fight Night* yet, and is one series that certainly isn't ducking or weaving out of the limelight. **Nathan Irvine**

■ **Fight Night Round 3** *is in stores now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ The most technically superb fighting ever. – Training games are in need of an overhaul.	+ Literally pushing PS2 to its limits. – The cut-out crowds are completely dire.	+ Roars of aggression and blood-curdling impacts. – Repetitive soundtrack and corner-men advice.

LIFESPAN

Plugging your way through the extensive career mode will last weeks. And, of course, you've multi-player games as well.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

IT'S WORSE THAN...
SOUL CALIBUR 3

EA's solid scrapper bows out of the PS2 division in style. Top notch visuals and subtly tweaked fight mechanics makes this one well-rounded beat-'em-up.

87

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Square Enix
Publisher: Ubisoft
Players: 1
Memory Save: 48 kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

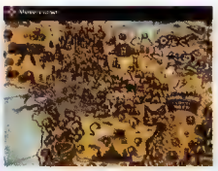
PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
Drakengard is known as *Drag On Dragoon* in Japan. A dragoon is actually soldier trained to fight on foot, but ride on horseback.".

GAMEPIE
65% Hacking and slashing.
35% Breathing fire at tiny men.

GAMEFAX
RPG
Jap Curio
Goblins
Easy

TRIVBURST
- Five lands to scorch.
- Freely change between characters during battle.
- Use supercharged attacks to cause 100 times normal damage.

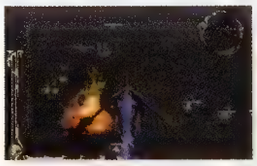
The MON£Y $HOT
Dragon riding ought to be the most exciting thing in the world, but *Drakengard 2* makes it seem humdrum, like doing the hoovering.

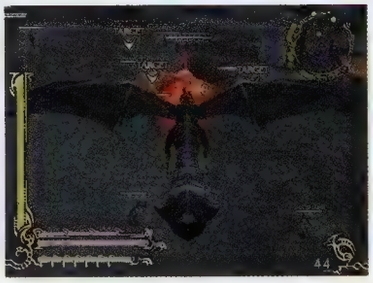


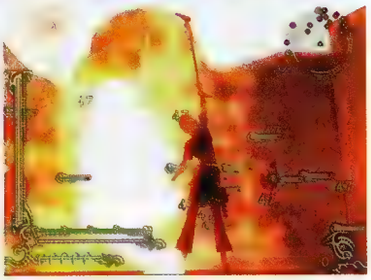
SWORD ALMIGHTY

You can find a wide variety of weapons for each character and they'll gain new special attacks as they level up. You'll often find new weapons to be less powerful than ones you've been using for a while, but level them up a bit and incredibly powerful attacks become available that will take out hordes of enemies at once. Bok!

BLAST OFF: Upgrade your special attacks. Mind Blast, eh? Andy once had that at a party and ended up naked. As usual.







"STUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON"

DRAKENGARD 2

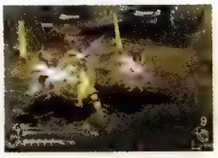
Think we won't notice you slipping this one out amid the glory of *Kingdom Hearts 2*, Square Enix? Think again...

Despite being a mix of *Panzer Dragoon* and *Dynasty Warriors* and having little new to say for itself, *Drakengard* managed to find itself a reasonably big audience. *Dynasty Warriors* fans aren't looking for something wildly different, after all – they know what they like and what they like is cutting a swathe through hundreds of enemies over and over again. Adding a dragon was a bonus – after all, there are few things that can't be made more fun by adding a fire-breathing dragon, except maybe building yourself a house out of balsa wood. But is this sequel more 'drag' than 'dragon'?

Taking place 18 years on from the first game, the game stars Nowe. He's expected to be 'the saviour of the land', which is a lot of pressure to place on the shoulders of a boy who's been brought up by a giant blue dragon. Anyway, this means you get a whole lot of air battling, like *Panzer Dragoon*, and ground scrapping, like *Dynasty Warriors*. Up in the skies, Legna can lock-on to a load of enemies at once by passing the cursor over them (like in *Rez*) and unleash flaming death, or let off a load of fireballs indiscriminately, which is more powerful, but less accurate.

STENCH FOOT

Eventually, though, you'll have to dismount and continue on foot, because for some reason, there are enemies who can't withstand a big sword, but can happily take a fireball in the face without so much as breaking stride. Game logic, eh? Anyway, this enforces you to think a bit tactically – as different weapons have different effects on different enemies – and you also get to wander round some (slightly generic) dungeons solving (slightly generic) puzzles. It's rather more fun being airborne, to be honest with you.



Drakengard 2 is fun enough to play through but there's nothing fresh here. The cut-scenes are pretty enough but the in-game graphics are sparse and dank, and the enemy count on screen is actually quite low. Much lower than *Dynasty Warriors* or *Devil Kings*, for example. At the end of PS2's life cycle, we really expect to see developers to push the technology to its limits – especially such luminaries as Square Enix. But this doesn't, nor does it offer anything new in gameplay terms. Still, those who've bought all five editions of *Dynasty Warriors*, plus the *Xtreme Legends* and *Samurai Warriors* games, will probably go mad for this. But if you've bought all of those *and* you get this into the bargain, well, you're an absolute mental. Really. **Kirsten Kearney**

■ Drakengard 2 *is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Hack and slash goodness... – ...although only until repetitiveness begins.	+ Lovely cut-scenes and animations. – Murky in-game graphics way below par..	+ Pleasant sound effects. – Bizarre voices. Our dragon-riding hero sounds like Harry Potter.

LIFESPAN
There's plenty here but it's extremely repetitive. Once you've played a few levels, you've seen it all.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
DYNASTY WARRIORS 5

IT'S WORSE THAN...
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

Drakengard wasn't doing anything new two years ago and its sequel does nothing new either. This really is a case of flogging a dead dragon.

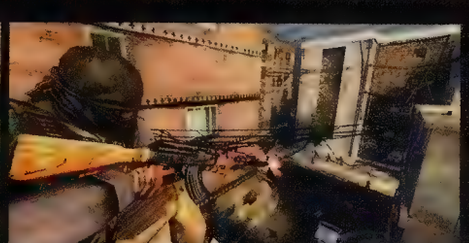
54

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

TEN HAMMERS

COMMAND A WIDE RANGE OF SQUADS
US Light Infantry, US Special Forces,
Multi-National Coalition Forces

UTILISE REAL-WORLD COMBAT TACTICS
Outthink, Outmaneuvre, Outgun Enemies Through
Over 12 Levels of Intense Combat



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15

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INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Square Enix
Publisher: Square Enix
Players: 1
Memory Save: 433kb
Surround Sound: Yes
50-60Hz: No
Widescreen: Yes

QUESTION...
How on Earth did Square Enix and Disney decide to join forces and work together in the first place?

GAMEFAX
Action
RPG

The MON£¥ $HOT
In this boss battle, you team up with Auron from *FFX* to defeat Hades, the villain from Hercules, voiced by James Woods. An amazing scene.

DRIVE ALIVE

By charging himself up with drive power (by defeating enemies), Sora can combine with either Donald or Goofy to become more powerful. By fusing with Goofy you achieve the Brave Form. This lets Sora wield two Keyblades. Fuse with Donald and you can use Wisdom Form, which means you skid around the battlefield and fire magic from your keyblade. You can also combine with two party members to achieve Master Form. This increases your stats and gives you the ability to double-jump away from attacks. Lastly, there's Final Form. This lets you perform amazing combos and magic attacks.

PSM2 GOLD AWARD

STAR POWER: Each form switch lasts about a minute. If you want to do it again, you'll need to kill enemies and fill your drive.

"I'M SO DISNEY MY HEAD IS SPINNING"

KINGDOM HEARTS II

Tron meets the Little Mermaid meets Aladdin. Play the new leader of the RPG revival pack, then raise your voice and sing with the fishes...

When it comes to their respective fields, Square Enix and Disney are untouchable. You won't find a better console RPG than a *Final Fantasy* or a *Dragon Quest* and every Hollywood animator in the world owes their living to Disney, the forefathers and masters of the animated feature film. So what happens when the most talented artists and designers in the world join forces? Something magical, that's what. Something called *Kingdom Hearts*.

But while the first game was indeed glorious and fantastic and all of those things, it was also rife with flaws. Flaws that, depressingly, held it back from true greatness. The notoriously wonky camera, the fiddly combat system, the brutal learning curve – trivial things the developers really should have spent more time tweaking. But forget about that. Think of the first game as the dress rehearsal to its sequel's big-budget Broadway epic.

Absolutely everything sparkles with quality. The game merrily flings thousands of polygons and particle effects around the screen at a constant 60fps, never glitching, slowing down or otherwise faltering. Clipping errors? Pop-up? Unheard of, even at its most frantic. Then there's the amazingly subtle facial animation, the sheer volume of original characters (you won't find hordes of identical citizens roaming the game's towns) and the unbelievable amount of variation between levels. We could go on, but just look at those screenshots. The looks speak for themselves.

"That's all fine and good" we hear you mutter "but how does it handle?" Well, you'll be glad to know that gameplay-wise it's very much on par with the stellar visuals. Combat is real-time, although magic and items are selected via a traditional *Final Fantasy*-style menu. You lock on with L1, swing your keyblade with ○, jump with ✕ and, well, that's it. It's simpler than first year maths, but that doesn't mean it's for babies – there are enough spells, modifiers, weapons and moves to appease even the most fevered of RPG dullards. There's something in *KH2* for everyone.

One of the best things about the combat is the ability to perform combination moves with another character. Watching Sora and Hercules give each other a high five then kick ass together is glorious and every character has one, be it Simba from The Lion King, Aladdin, Captain Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean or Tron. There are also 'reaction' elements to each battle. Pressing △

TRIVBURST

- Hundreds of characters to interact with
- Six new worlds, six returning worlds and four original levels
- Combine with your party to unlock super-powers

DOT.NET

http://www.kh2.co.uk/

Quite simply, the best Kingdom Hearts fansite in the world. KH-Illuminata has info on absolutely every element, series and character full of insane fans. Check it out.

GAMEPIE

40% Spotting Disney characters

30% Fighting them

20% Spotting RI characters

10% Fighting them

TOP FIVE HEARTS

- Tony Hellart
- Heartbeat
- Hellen Keller
- Hellart to Hellart
- Heart attacks

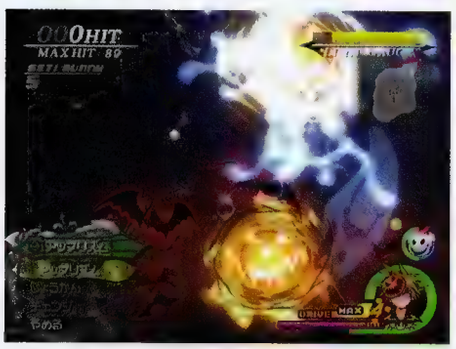
ANSWER...

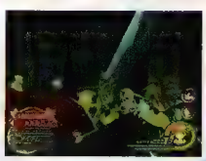
Both the Japanese wing Disney and Square Enix work out of the same block of the same building. It'd be weird to build decided that they should do something together.

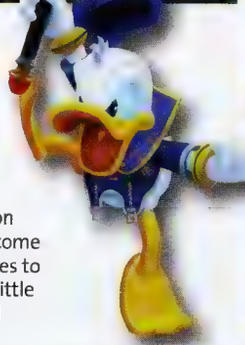
POWER OF THREE: Sora attacks with his keyblade, Goofy with a shield and Donald with a magic wand.

BIG IS BETTER: Some of the bosses are huge. This hulking great beast is a Heartless, your main enemy.

FIRE-WALKER: Help Jack Sparrow defeat the evil Barbossa. He's quite handy with a sword.







down Heartless ships and collecting power-ups. Oh, and you can edit your ship's colour, shape and abilities in the game's surprisingly flexible editor.

The worlds themselves change the entire aesthetic of the game depending on which Disney film they're based on. In the Timeless River (based on the 1928 Mickey Mouse cartoon Steamboat Willie) Sora, Goofy and Donald become simplified, monochrome versions of themselves to match the era, and in Atlantica (home of the Little Mermaid) they adapt to the environment and

PARTY TIME

In each world, a character specific to it will join your party and fight alongside you. So for example, in the Land of Dragons you'll fight with Mulan to help her defeat the perpetually evil Shan Yu, and in Port Royal (Pirates of the Caribbean) you'll help Captain Jack Sparrow defeat zombie pirate Captain Barbossa. Each character has their own weapon too – Tron has his frisbee thing, Hercules has brute strength and Simba from the Lion King has his claws. It's a shame though that, once you leave the world, you'll go back to your original party of Sora, Donald and Goofy. Think of the 'hilarious' fish out of (or in?) water scenarios if you took Tron to see the Little Mermaid. Maybe next time.

COMBINE HARVESTER: Press Ⓐ at the right moment to perform a graphically-amazing team move. They're brilliant.

MAKE A WISH: The genie joins your party, although you can only call him up when your drive meter is full enough.

at the right moment performs either a special attack, a dodge or something more elaborate using the scenery around you or other nearby objects. The fight scenes are relentless, fast-paced and frantic, which helps keep repetition at bay.

GUMMI STARES

But what with this being an RPG and all, there's just as much exploration as there is fighting. Remember the Gummi Ship levels from the last game? If you do, you'll recall that they were abysmal shoot-'em-up minigames that you had to clear to get to the next level. Well, they're back, but the good news is that they're now excellent fun. And they look gorgeous too. Upon first seeing it in action, Dan D exclaimed "It looks like *Rez!*", which is the best description we can come up with, really. So every time you want to move between worlds you have to fly through a length of space, shooting

"GAMEPLAY IS ON A PAR WITH THE STELLAR VISUALS, AND EVERYTHING SPARKLES WITH QUALITY"

become sea creatures, Goofy a turtle and Donald an octopus. Not only that, but menus, sounds, effects and hundreds of other elements change to fit the theme of the film. The amount of care and detail that's gone into these transformations is unreal and just wandering around is a joy in itself.

As is Square Enix tradition, there are a wealth of minigames to take part in too. These range from odd jobs (to earn extra money), skateboarding (yes, there's a fully-featured skating engine in there) and our favourite; rhythm action sing-alongs with the Little Mermaid. Visit Atlantica and chat to Flounder to sing one of several songs from the film that are steadily unlocked as you play through the game, culminating in the truly excellent 'Under The Sea'. What? No, we haven't become women. We just like singing fish.

BEST OF THE BEAST: Sora and the Beast combine their powers to unleash a powerful magic attack.

Import Reviews

PLAYED TO DESTRUCTION BY PS2 EXPERTS

DISNEY'S LANDS

Here are all the weird and wonderful locations you'll visit throughout your *Kingdom Hearts* adventure. There's no Toy Story land, but you can't have everything.

HOLLOW BASTION

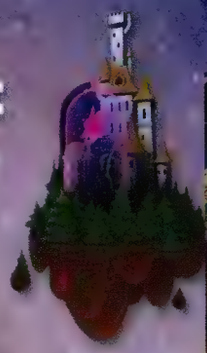
The home of the Square Enix characters in *Kingdom Hearts*. You meet Merlin here and can play skateboarding minigames.

SPACE PARANOIDS

The strangest world you'll visit in *Kingdom Hearts 2*. This level is based on the sci-fi film Tron and sees you teaming up with the title character, the destroyer of evil programs, to defeat Commander Sark. You also get to ride lightcycles in an exciting minigame.

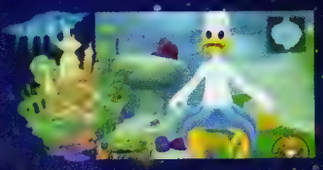
BEAST'S CASTLE

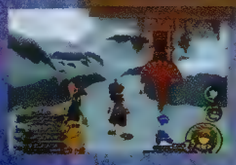
This gloomy castle is the home base of the beast, a monstrous creature who is actually an enchanted prince. You team up with the beast after he mistakenly imprisons you and work together to defeat a monster Heartless lord in his dungeon.



ATLANTICA

The world of the Little Mermaid. You come here to engage in rhythm action [illegible] games. They're brilliant.





LAND OF DRAGONS

This world is home to Mulan and [illegible] and pits you against a variety of [illegible] Heartless and Nobodies and [illegible] Darkness and [illegible] Dragon.

AGRABAH

This world is home to Aladdin and [illegible] and pits you against a variety of [illegible] Heartless and Nobodies and [illegible] Darkness and [illegible] Jafar.

DISNEY CASTLE

You come here briefly to find King Mickey. He isn't there, but the Heartless are. Protect Minnie from them and escape.

TWILIGHT TOWN

This world is home to a [illegible] and pits you against a variety of [illegible] Heartless and Nobodies and [illegible] Darkness and [illegible] Axel.

PORT ROYAL

Finally a new 'realistic' world has appeared in *Kingdom Hearts*. This is the home of Jack Sparrow, the evil Barbossa, Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann – aka the movie Pirates of the Caribbean. Here you'll defend Will's ship from a Heartless [illegible] attack.

PRIDE LANDS

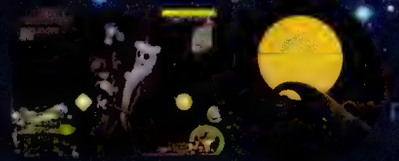
This is the land of the Lion King. Here you'll team up with Simba to defeat his mortal enemy Scar. You'll also meet Timon and Pumbaa and battle against a group of cackling hyenas. Your party also transform into animals. But, er, they're animals already?

100 ACRE WOOD

You [illegible] here from Winnie The Pooh's home [illegible] game. You'll have to [illegible] here for [illegible]

HALLOWEEN TOWN

Help Jack Skellington rescue Santa Claus from evil sack ghost Oogie Boogie. Fight alongside Jack for two epic boss battles.



COLOSSEUM

Here you'll battle a [illegible] and [illegible] in the colosseum with Hercules and [illegible] visit Hades and battle [illegible]

TIMELESS RIVER

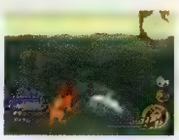
This world is entirely in black and white and is based on classic cartoons from the 1920s, including Steamboat Willie that brought Mickey Mouse to the world's attention. Here you'll help 1920s Pete defeat the Pete of the present day.

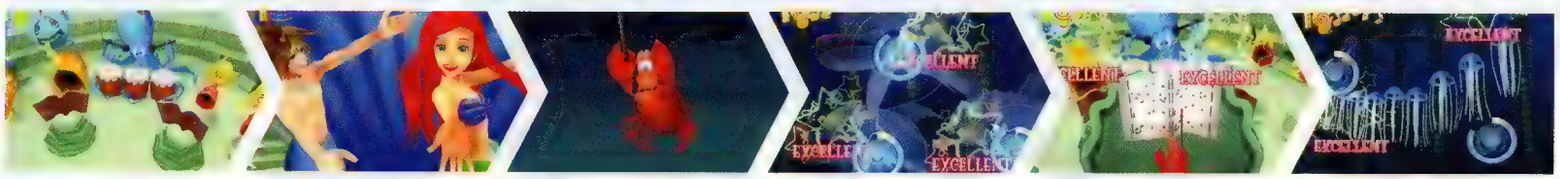
HAVING A BALL: The ballroom from the famous Beauty And The Beast scene that pioneered the use of film CG.

BOOK CLUB

As in the first game, Sora and the gang get to visit the 100 Acre Wood, home of Winnie The Pooh, Tigger, Piglet, Eeyore and the rest of the crew. You access the wood by shrinking and entering a magical book, although the book has been torn up and you need to find the missing pieces hidden in chests throughout the game. The Wood consists of (optional) minigames that you can complete to unlock extra, otherwise unattainable items. The game is full of sidequests like this, including the option to train and learn new forms and abilities at the Olympus Colosseum with Hercules.

POOH'S COMPANY: Piglet is stuck in a tree and you have to float up on this balloon to rescue him. It's a fun minigame.



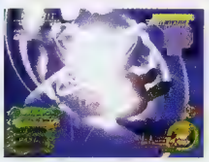


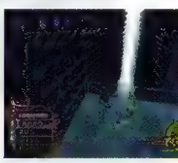
UNDER THE SEA: This is easily one of the best bits in the game. Sink to the depths of Atlantica and you can sing with Ariel, the Little Mermaid. It features all of the famous songs from the film and you have to follow button prompts in time with the music.

COMPUTER LOVE: The famous blue neon will be familiar to fans of the film Tron.

THE LION KING AND I: How good does this look? It's utterly gorgeous.

WOULD LIKE TO PETE: Help the Pete of old defeat the modern day version in the Timeless River level.





More good news – the number of cameos from the *Final Fantasy* series has increased dramatically. For fevered fanboys like us, seeing Setzer from *FFVI*, Vivi from *FFIX* and Seifer from *FFVIII* on the same screen was too much to handle. *Then* we were fighting alongside Auron from *FFX*, chatting to Cloud from *FFVII* and... well, you get the idea. Pretty much the entire gamut of Tetsuya Nomura's character roster make an appearance, not to mention around 100 Disney characters including Chip and Dale, Scrooge McDuck and Minnie Mouse. What a world we live in.

FLAW POLISH

Now, this is where we'd usually talk about the game's flaws. There must be something wrong with it, right? Well, there is, but in light of everything else mentioning the miniscule problems seems entirely pointless. But we have to. A couple of the levels are quite dull. Both the Tron and the Pirates Of The Caribbean stages suffer by being too, well, *realistic*. Take Pirates – you're plucked from the colourful sweeping plains of Pride Land (The Lion King) and forced to wander around a dark, rainy pirate cove. The missions within are fine (mostly), but the setting is a real let-down. You'll be counting the minutes until you're back among the sunshine and fun of the other, 'proper' Disney films.

And, er, that's it. We can't really comment on the story as of yet (we're playing the Japanese version so any wordy jokes or plot subtleties are sadly beyond us) but besides the stuff we mentioned in the last paragraph, *Kingdom Hearts 2* is something truly wondrous. Some of the RPG elements aren't as strong as they could've been and the odd mission can frustrate, but we feel it's our duty to recommend it. Although don't bother importing it – wait for a UK release and enjoy the game to its fullest, in English. **Andy Kelly**

You can import Kingdom Hearts II *now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY

+ Solid combat and hugely varied missions.
– Not quite as hardcore as *FFX*, perhaps..

GRAPHICS

+ Perfect in every way. Seriously.
– Well, er, some levels can be a tad dull.

SOUND

+ Top-notch voice acting and score.
– Nope. Can't fault it in any way.

LIFESPAN

Way longer than the last game. You can plough through the main bits in about 30 hours, but then there are the sidequests...

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
KINGDOM HEARTS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
FINAL FANTASY X

One of the strongest, most accomplished games on PS2. *KH2* excels on almost every level and sweats charm. Hate RPGs? This could change your mind.

90

INFOSTRIP

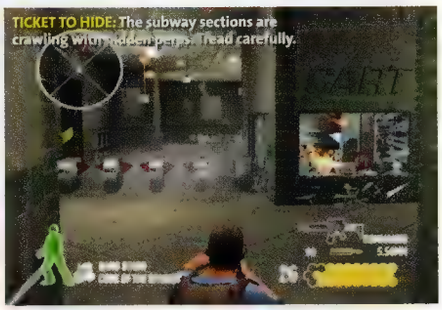
DETAILS
Developer: Avalanche
Publisher: Eidos
Players: 1-16
Memory Save: 48KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
Which rhyming criminals from the *25 To Life* soundtrack are sadly spittin' rhymes from under six feet of soil?

GAMEFAX
Action
Violence
Network play
Hard

The MON£Y $HOT
Teaming up with a couple of friends for a bloody cops and robbers battle online is like reliving your childhood. But with guns and death.

BAR-ROOM BLITZ: The Mexican pub siege, as you cap all and sundry, is one of the few highlights.


TICKET TO HIDE: The subway sections are crawling with hidden perps. Tread carefully.

"THROW AWAY THE KEY"

25 TO LIFE

The story of a family man who wants to leave crime behind by, erm, slaughtering everyone in sight. Whatever.

BLOOD-THIRSTY ALLEY: Taking a human shield can help you escape tight spots.

The precedent for this cops and robbers shoot-'em-up is set up early on. As soon as you use a hostage as a human shield you know how the rest of the *25 To Life* will pan out. Instead of the AI-controlled police deploying marksmen or negotiators to defuse the situation, or at least trying to shoot you and not the hostage, they let-rip and murder the pair of you. Thus begins the sweary mary, balls-out gunplay that'll have the Daily Mail in a right two and eight.

either of the two factions is the same. Groups of gun-toters strafe from every corner and topple like dominoes as you blast them to pieces. It's like you're playing an online deathmatch against thousands of bots. There's so much stuff to kill it instantly becomes mind-numbingly pointless.

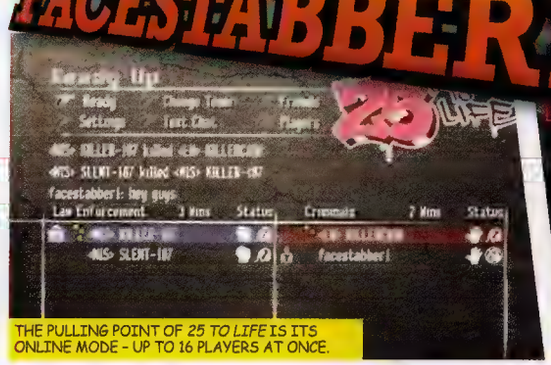
Are there any redeeming factors? Not really. The story is fractured and doesn't explain why you're maiming everyone like the bit where the main character Freeze (no, really) breaks out of jail during a riot. Rather than skipping past the brawling wardens and inmates, you're forced to thrust a broken bottle up a copper's pipe. Or why,

"IT'S A BIT LIKE AN ONLINE DEATHMATCH, BUT REALLY BORING"

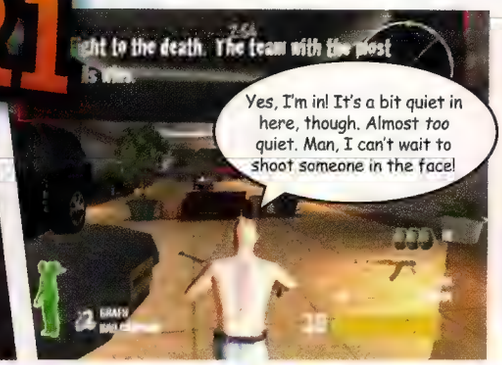
Aside from the rozzers treating civilians to be some sort of flesh-based Kevlar vest, *25 To Life* sets about completely smashing PR between hoodlums and the boys in blue. There's no getting around it either. Each unoriginal mission is pre-empted with a kill count you need to achieve to score bonuses so you're forced to kill and enjoy doing it. Playing as

THE ADVENTURES OF FACESTABBER1

The major pulling point of *25 To Life* is its online mode. Up to 16 players can battle it out across the in-game levels such as the jail, the mall and the warehouse. But despite the game being available for over a month in the US we could only find servers with a measly four people on them. You can even create your own avatar and dress it up with a lovely ski-mask/bandana combo, but we decided to dive straight in with the default look. Here's how our bloke, the charming Facestabber1, got on:



THE PULLING POINT OF *25 TO LIFE* IS ITS ONLINE MODE – UP TO 16 PLAYERS AT ONCE.



THE TABLES ARE TURNED. IT SEEMS THE OPPOSITION ARE COUPLE OF CAMPERS.
Ha, ha. Eat grenades! And bullets, you dirty camping bar-stewards! I'm the man. The stripped-to-the-waist, rampaging man!

FACESTABBER IS THE MAN! VICTORY IS NIGH!
With my new shirt-based booty these Mexicans won't know what hit them! Bullets! And plenty of them!

IN THE TINY, RACIST, BLINKERED WORLD OF 25 TO LIFE FACESTABBER1 RULES!
Your brains are on the wall, gringo! I'm so the best. I'm, like, the Lord of Online. Er... So what if there's only four people playing?

My eyes! Where'd they get those Molotovs? This is how the worm must feel in a tequila bottle...
SUDDENLY, THINGS TAKE SOMETHING OF A TURN FOR THE WORST...

"FAILS TO DO ANYTHING UNIQUE. AND THERE'S A CHARACTER THAT LOOKS LIKE SEAN PAUL. WE HATE SEAN PAUL."

as Hispanic gang-lord Sean, you end up in Mexico firing off an AK-47 from the bowels of a shanty bar.

SPEAK UNEASY

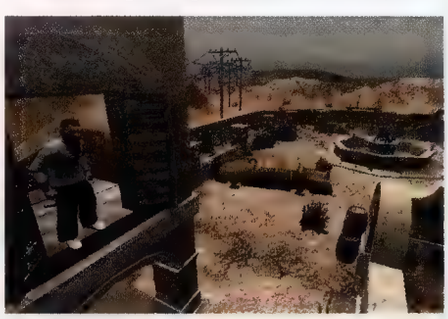
Not only is the violence rubbish, but so is the dialogue, which suggests that cops hate everyone and that people who hang out in gangs would shoot a passer-by at the drop of a bandana. Some of the lyrical content is homophobic – well, either that or the Geto Boys have a problem with a Welsh recipe involving pig's livers (stick it in Google). And there's a character who looks like Sean Paul. And we *hate* Sean Paul. It's even got graffiti bits too. So you could say it's got all bases covered. Badly.

While the main missions are no-brainers (kill everyone and get to a checkpoint) it does try to spice things up by, for instance, throwing in a rookie cop who you've got to protect or by making you pull off a 'daring bank robbery'. It even encourages you to take cover in order to subdue your run-and-gun antics. You do – at times – feel as though you're inching to your destination by actually employing tactics, what with the tear gas and pipe bombs you can deploy before entering a room. There are stealth elements too, but they're crap and involve you shuffling awkwardly before delivering a tyre iron to the noggin. But all these elements melt into one after a couple of hours.

But the main problem with *25 To Life* is that it's massively difficult. The targets shift around erratically, which would be fine if your crosshair wasn't so off-the-mark. It seems to change from white (nothing in range) to red (shoot to kill) randomly, making it frustratingly random. Perseverance isn't rewarded either. You get a lousy tattoo or bandana for your online character and little else for your time.

25 To Life is terrible, and fails to do anything remotely unique. You've got lots of guns, but you've had that before, and better. You've got loads of people to shoot, but you've had that before, and better. And you've an urban setting. And you've had that too many times already. And one rarely as uninspiring as this. This is one game that should be left to rot behind bars. For life. **Nathan Irvine**

■ ***25 To Life is out on import right now.***



PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ No-nonsense shoot-to-kill action. – Dry, lifeless and totally unoriginal.	+ Nice bold characters. – It's buggy. We saw a man's face on the back of our bloke's head.	+ Decent gun sounds and a few nice songs. – But the soundtrack is ultimately repetitive.

LIFESPAN
If you're online then *25 To Life* will offer a straightforward accessible shooter. But the single-player game is joyless.
MINUTES

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CRIME LIFE

IT'S WORSE THAN...
50 CENT

The action is linear and unexciting, and while it tries to incorporate varying sub-missions, it all feels samey. Pray it never comes to the UK.

35

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sumo Digital
Publisher: Sega
Players: 1
Memory Save: 1303kb
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
is the plural of Ferrari 'Ferrarii'?

PUBTALK
"There've been numerous *OutRun* spin-offs, the most dismal of which was *OutRun 2019*, which came with a really rubbish controller."

GAMEFAX
Driving | Sequel | Addictive | Online

TRIVBURST
- Dozens of licensed Ferraris including the Enzo.
- Contains tracks from *OutRun 2* and *OutRun 2 SP*.
- Spend accumulated 'miles' on hundreds of unlockables.

"THE COAST WITH THE MOST"

OUTRUN COAST2COAST

So fast it makes Speedy Gonzalez look like regular Gonzalez.

You know what we'd love? If more developers focused on making one feature of their game great instead of filling it with hundreds of half-finished ideas. Content isn't everything you know; one idea, providing it's sufficiently well-designed, can be stretched for miles. Think of how many hours you've spent playing *Tetris*. Loads, right? And all you've been doing is stacking odd-shaped blocks.

Well the same applies to *OutRun*. We must've sunk at least 40 hours into the thing and all we've been doing is drifting through basically one track. The route and theme of the courses may vary, but it's essentially the same thing every time. But thanks to that focused care and attention we mentioned earlier, it never gets boring.

It's mainly down to the drifting, which could well be the most satisfying sensation in the world. Well, the world of videogames at least. If you thought the outlandish powersliding in *Ridge Racer* was fun, *OutRun* will blow your mind. Tapping ◻ and teasing the analogue stick into a bend turns your car almost horizontal as you career smoothly around the apex with your girlfriend's hands waving in the air. You feel like the man. You *are* the man and nothing's gonna stop you. Unless you hit another car that is. But even then it just spins out, disappears and you continue skidding along. Perfect arcade gameplay.

But it's this simplistic arcade approach to racing that has the office split on whether or not *OutRun 2006* is actually any good. "It's sub-*Burnout*!" the doubters shout. "Look at those awful collisions and the basic handling!" Well, that's a fair point. Clip another car or an obstacle and you won't crash 'realistically' like in *Burnout* – you'll lose a little speed or flip over and land on your wheels. But does that really matter? Of course it doesn't. It's a bloody arcade game. The less founded in realism it is, the better. There are no 'crash points', combos or anything. It's just pure racing and the joy is in the *driving*.

The haters will also tell you that this simplification is a step backwards for driving games. Well, they're sort of

CONNECT PHWOAR

Brilliantly, you can play *C2C* online. Brilliant if anyone's playing it, that is. You can also transfer data between PS2 and PSP versions via a USB cable. Some cars can only be bought in the PSP version, so it's basically a way of making you buy both versions of the game. That said you can also transfer saves between them, so if you get a good score on the bus you can continue your game when you get home to the full-size PS2 version.

STEP ONE: Create a new profile in the PSP version of the game. Connect it to your PS2 with a USB cable and select 'link-up'.

STEP TWO: Your profile has been transferred. Notice the PSP icon in the corner? This helps you identify which users are which.

TOP 5 FERRARIS

- Enzo
- 288 GTO
- 512 Boxer
- F50
- 430 Spyder

GAMEPIE

40% Drifting.
20% Being slapped by your girlfriend.
20% More drifting.
20% Cooing at the landscapes.

ANSWER

No. But it should be.

NIGHT SHIFT

One of the best things about *OutRun* is that there are no loading times between tracks. When you reach the end of a course you cruise through a highway that links each 'zone'. As you drive, the sky shifts in real-time and changes the entire look of the game. When night falls your headlights blink on and when you're cruising through the grand canyon, the sun sets and your Ferrari is washed with gorgeous orange light. It really does look amazing at times, although a lot of the textures are notciably ropier than those in the Xbox and arcade versions. Oh well, you can't have everything.

VIEW ME YOUR This huge canyon is one of the best-looking courses. It's from *OutRun 2 SP*, the special arcade version.

HEART OF THE MATTER: One of the challenges in Heart Attack mode is to drift along, keeping inside this line.

right, but essentially wrong. Is making something more fun than the likes of *Gran Turismo* a step *backwards*? Hell, no. It's a step forwards... for humanity! The part of the humanity that plays games at least. Which, let's face it, is the best and only part worth bothering about.

BETTER THAN THE BEST

This version of *OutRun* combines all of the content from *OutRun 2* (which appeared previously on Xbox) and *OutRun 2 SP*, which was an arcade-only special edition. But it's more than just a cheap re-hash – they've fixed problems with the main 'career' mode's structure and polished everything up to a fine, chromey gleam. There's now a showroom where you can trade accumulated '*OutRun* Miles' for new cars, background music, paint jobs and more. We recommend the 'euro mix' of Magical Sound Shower. Slipping around a bend to *that* steel drum solo is up there with the most memorable videogame moments of all time.

There's a whole raft of licensed, gorgeous-looking Ferraris to unlock from the 360 Spider and the Testarossa to the F40 and the mighty Enzo. Our only gripe is that despite being accurately-modelled down to the smallest detail, they all handle the same, ie. not at all like real life. But again, only people who enjoy adjusting tire pressures in *TOCA* care about that kind of thing; the fact that they look nice and red and shiny is enough for us. Forget all hope of this being a 'Ferrari simulator' and you'll be fine.

As well as classic *OutRun* mode (get from point A to point B before the timer runs out), there are also Heart Attack challenges. In these you have to impress your girlfriend by performing tasks for her such as dribbling a beach ball, knocking over cones, and hitting other cars. Fail and she'll dump you. Yep, just like life. There are also traditional races against up to 11 opponents and time trials. But again, it boils down to one simple type of play; drift, accelerate, drift, accelerate and repeat.

So yeah. That's all there is to it. You may worry that the lack of content makes it sound like it should be a budget game, but that's simply not the case. You'll get hours of entertainment from *OutRun 2006* and you'll be dipping in and out for months to come. Until you've cleared route A in under four minutes you can never truly say that you've lived. **Andy Kelly**

"IF YOU THOUGHT POWERSLIDING IN RIDGE RACER WAS FUN, THEN OUTRUN WILL SOAK YOUR BOXERS"

■ *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast is out on March 31st.*

PSM VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Smooth and yielding. Liquid gameplay. – Some challenges are insanely difficult.	+ Gorgeous, sun-drenched lushness. – Some bland textures here and there.	+ The best videogame music ever. – Annoying voiceovers. But nothing too bad.

LIFESPAN

Could theoretically last forever, especially with online play. You *will* play it until you're the absolute *OutRun* master.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CRAZY TAXI

IT'S WORSE THAN...
GRAN TURISMO 4

Pure sunshine gaming. Fast, beautiful and perfectly playable. Embrace its simplicity and lose yourself in the ride of your life. Don't expect ANY realism though.

89

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Pyro Studios
Publisher: Eidos
Players: 1-8
Memory Save: 45kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"War? In 1969 a football match between Honduras and El Salvador sparked a riot, leading to a war, which lasted six days."

GAMEPIE
40% Sitting, waiting.
30% Strangling people
10% Blowing things up.
10% Searching for knives.
10% Looking through keyholes.

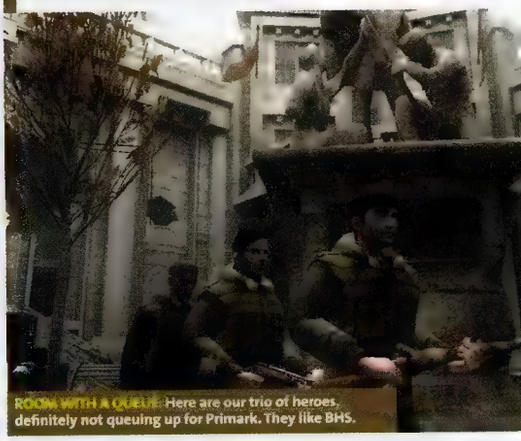
GAMEFAX
Network Play
Sequel
Violent
War

TRIVBURST
- The original *Commandos* group has six members: thief, marine and driver failed to make the cut.
- This is the fifth *Commandos* game in total on all formats.

The MON£Y $HOT
The change of pace can be varied. One moment you're skulking behind enemy lines. The next, a full-on war zone as the Nazis launch a sneak attack.

DO IT HOW YOU REICH

One of the best bits is the amount of options open to you. Take the sniper: he might be a dab hand with a sniping rifle, but it doesn't always have to come to this. He can get past guards by taking them down with a well-aimed knife, or he can sneak up close for some good ol' fashioned choking. The spy, meanwhile, comes armed with a infinite supply of silver coins, which he can flick in the air to distract guards and make good his escape. If all else fails, you can swim to safety, which is nice, as it's surprising how many soldiers in videogames don't yet have their ten metres certificate.



ROOM WITH A QUEUE: Here are our trio of heroes, definitely not queuing up for Primark. They like BHS.

TOUR DE FORCE: *Commandos* takes place all over Europe, from France to Russia and beyond.

"BE SMART, BE QUIET, BE A BIT UNDERWHELMING"

COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE

A game based on World War II? Nah, it'll never catch on.

A remake of *Commandos*, posing as an FPS? How very odd. That's a bit like making *Grand Theft Auto 6* an educational title, or re-branding 'bitter' as a sports drink. Those familiar with the *Commandos* trilogy, a series of isometric strategy games, will know that a first-person shooter is everything that *Commandos* isn't. But what we do have is the bare ingredients of the series – a WWII sim putting you in control of a range of army specialists, who stroll around looking for bushes to hide in and Nazis to beat up.

It doesn't quite manage to pull the reorientation off, but it comes close. In fact, there's loads to commend. *Strike Force* slimlines the group into three characters, all of whom are appreciably different to play as. When circumstances allow, you can swap between these guys using △, a gameplay mechanic that works well as all three characters bring something different to the table. You can even control another as your comrade receives treatment, allowing you to reposition your squad to better provide cover.

SNIPE CLEAN AND RE-USE

Onto the 'characters'. There's the cockney-sounding sniper, who, well, snipes people, and is equipped with throwing knives that, curiously, are more deadly than any gun the Germans have to hand. Then we have the obnoxiously macho Green Beret, whose 'thing' is to blow up everything remotely hostile-looking. Lastly, we have the spy, who gets his kicks from garrotting people as they piss then wearing their sodden uniforms. Ah, a character we can relate to.

The game has its moments; the level design is good, and the characters are generally likeable and flexible. But the game is let down by woeful AI – soldiers act nonplussed even as gunshots and screams ring nearby, and often they'll just stand still while you run off into the distance. And while everything is nice and all, soon you'll wonder why you're not just playing a game that does one thing well, instead of this jack of all (well, three) trades. Stuff that for a game of soldiers. **Alex Dale**

■ *Feel the* Strike Force *on March 17th.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Atmospheric, diverse and rewarding. – Some aspects don't make the leap to 3D.	+ Nice cut-scenes and good explosions. – Washed-out look makes some things hard to see.	+ Excellent sound effects. We mean it, too. – Repeated speech during missions is amateurish.

LIFESPAN
The plot is strong, and replay value is assured by a set of mission objectives and on-line multi-player

MONTHS — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
AMERICA'S ARMY

IT'S WORSE THAN...
BROTHERS IN ARMS

A decent attempt with some really nice touches. But everything that's to be found here has been done better in any number of World War II titles.

68

THE HOTTEST NEWS ON THE PLANET...

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES .COM

CVG

FROM EUROPE'S NO.1 GAMING WEBSITE

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Pandemic
Publisher: THQ
Players: 1-8 online
Memory Save: 306 kb
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...
The Bradley tank seems rather slow in *Ten Hammers*, but how fast does it shift in real life?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Machine Head did the music for the first *Full Spectrum Warrior* and the highly-similar movie tie-in *Black Hawk Down*."

GAMEFAX
War | Shooter | Sequel | Hard

TRIVBURST
- *Ten Hammers* uses authentic squad tactics just like real soldiers.
- All the characters have their views on the conflict and chat among themselves

The MON£Y $HOT
There's little more satisfying than inching your way through the streets before calling in the cavalry for a devastating air-strike. It's a little light (and destructive) relief.

INVISIBLE MEN: We bet you can't see the soldiers in this pic, what with their camo gear. You can't. Oh.

"STOP – HAMMER TIME"

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS

Where the brain is mightier than the gun. And the tank is mightier than the brain.

Oh man, there's never been a war game that makes you work so hard as *Full Spectrum Warrior*. You can tell its training roots immediately – the game comes from a simulation used to drill US Army infantry men on tactics in the field – and its two lessons to winning war are utterly crucial. One – never, ever, ever get caught outside of cover under any circumstances whatsoever. And two – the side that swears the most, wins. Shit yeah.

Yup, when you're not desperately scanning the landscape for some cover that both adequately protects your men from insurgent bullets, your [illegible] are all "Shit – outta ammo!" or "It's a bit [illegible] dodgy, Sir!" or (our personal favourites) "We're f***ing f*** f***ed!" – *FSW Ten Hammers* wears its 18 certificate rating like a mother-[illegible]-thing-purple heart. But back to that [illegible] stuff – if you're new, *FSW* is a tactical game that looks like a shooter, where you order your men around the war-torn urban landscapes, trying first to keep them out of harms way and deal the pain second. Have one of your squad out in the open for more than a couple of seconds and they'll be more exposed than a streaker at a funeral and it's another body bag on the way home.

Thankfully they've eased the burden this time. If one of your men falls in the line of duty you can carry him to the CAVESAC (re-supply point and re-spawn point) for a replacement, eliminating the hugely frustrating 'one strike and you're out' gameplay. Three will have to die in the field for a mission failure. Other improvements have mixed success. You can now order air strikes to take out really hard to reach enemies and you've got more control over your squad to split them into smaller teams to further flex your tactical muscle. However, the new precision aiming system seems a little schizophrenic. This lets you select an individual team member and train their fire on a position, but while some men, like your grenadier, have strangely pin-point accuracy to where your cursor aims, the automatic rifleman sprays

HOT HOT HEAT

Tell your soldiers to move to a position while hot and they'll be ready to fire against anyone who pops up. Unfortunately, being ready to blow an insurgent's brains out at any moment means that they move slower than Miss Daisy with a flat – but it's certainly preferable to, well, instant death.

COVER ME BAD: This brain-dead terrorist thinks crouching by a post will help destroy our freedom. Time for some rough justice.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

COVER BOY: This broken-down car needs repairing, but provides handy cover from enemy gunfire.

TOP 5 HAMMERS

- Sledgehammer
- Claw Hammer
- MC Hammer
- Hammerhead shark
- Hammer Gettin' Outta Here!

GAMEPIE

80% Hiding.
10% Shooting.
5% Re-supplying.
5% Lofting grenades.

ANSWER

This 'battle-taxi' zips at 38mph and with a range of just under 250 miles is one of the most versatile vehicles in the US Army.

BRAD TO THE BONE

This is Bradley – a very, very dangerous tank. In the game when you spend the entire time trying to avoid unbelievably accurate fire, spotting the tank pop up on Hurlie on your HUD brings some seriously light relief. Practically impermeable, the enemy has no answer to its powerful cannon and reminds you that you're fighting for the world's greatest superpower. YAH! You'll also get to control a sniper whose gun can shoot through cover and a scout who, being a local, doesn't attract quite as much attention as your camouflaged guests.

KILLING YOU SOFTLY: The Bradley Tank is the vehicle of choice for killing multiple enemies with extreme prejudice.

bullets with all the accuracy of Peter [illegible]. And while you're using this system you're [illegible] vulnerable to enemy fire, which given the hit-and-miss nature of the aiming makes this a risky business. Still, it's there if you want it.

IF WE BUILD IT...

Pandemic have worked wonders and now you can enter buildings. Finally you're able to breach stairwells, clear out any snipers and take the higher ground for yourself. This is great for having a team cover the other below. And the indoor stuff doesn't stop there – you'll take the fight through several settings, including Turkish baths, houseboats and a palace crawling with enemies.

And for the first time you'll get to control vehicles too – mainly the Bradley tank. You can aim both the machine gun and cannon of this with devastating effect, and when you're given the opportunity to use it, it's best to get it up front and use it as the battering ram of your attack. Unfortunately, you order it around in much the same way as your men, making it feel really sluggish. We want to really *drive* the thing!

They've even attempted a real storyline this time too. The basic premise is that you have to stop the out-break of civil war in Zekistan, which you'll achieve through securing a bridge and wiping out hundreds of incredibly accurate enemies. The tale unfolds through reports from a television journalist and from the squad themselves in cut-scenes, although working out the entire details and exactly where you fit into the grand scheme of things seems a bit messy – but then maybe that's the point. You'll also get the chance to control a British squad, and unusually for Americans telling a war story, they do more than provide handle-bar moustaches – and actually save some US bacon. Less unusually, the range of accents is typically crude, with forced cock-ernee use of such colourful colloquialisms as "bloody wanker".

Despite the tweaks and additions its genius core game play is still there. There's nothing else to touch it in terms of mixing strategy and action, making this another satisfyingly-tough tactical challenge for anyone tired of predictable war-based gun-and-runners. Go get 'em. **Greg Kendle**

■ *Save Zekistan or*

"HAVE SOMEONE BREAK COVER AND THEY'LL BE MORE EXPOSED THAN A STREAKER AT A FUNERAL"

FULL SPECCY WARRIOR: This grunt proves that four eyes are better than two.

SQUAD DOWN: Zekistan is actually the world's most dangerous place, but it's always worth taking a breather to assess your next attack.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Win this and you've earned your stripes. – Still too many infuriating bottlenecks.	+ Some imaginative locations. – Lots of brown. Best get used to it.	+ Top-notch squad banter, world class swearing. – Plenty of stirring, noble theme music.

LIFESPAN

A tough cookie to crack, seeing it through will challenge any gamer, especially on the 'Authentic' difficulty level.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
MOH: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

IT'S WORSE THAN...
CALL OF DUTY 2

Ten Hammers is a solid return but, despite much tinkering, it doesn't advance the game that much. Still, it's satisfyingly different to anything else out there.

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INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Tecmo
Publisher: Take 2
Players: 1
Memory Save: 104kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"A concealed pit with sharpened stakes at the bottom is technically known as 'Punji sticks'."

GAMEPIE
45% Laying traps.
45% Camera trauma.
8% Laughing at Lionel.
2% "These girls don't wear many clothes..."

GAMEFAX
Puzzle
Easy
Shit
Jap Curio

TRIVBURST
- Make traps and lure guards into them.
- Then do it again.
- And again.
- Until you wither and die.

The MON£Y $HOT
You can rack up combos if you can send enemies lurching from trap to trap. But you won't really care if you do or don't, to be honest. Ah, well.

NICE TRAPS, LUV

The traps themselves are nicely varied – there are paving slabs that spring people into the air; giant crushing rocks; guillotines; bear pits and something called an 'infuriating bedpan'. Any guards that step in it get cross, and are more likely to blunder angrily into traps. Quite. But once you've found a lethal-enough combo of traps (hint: try the giant saw, the buzz saw and the bomb pit) the whole thing becomes an absolute cakewalk. How rubbish.

POP A TRAP IN HIS ASS: Press ◎ to pause, and use this screen to lay your traps. Then lure your enemies into them. Repeat forever.

"PONY AND TRAP"

TRAPT

"We're lost in music – caught in a trap!" But by 'music' we mean 'crap puzzler'.

The undisputed king of 'games characters with spectacularly non-apt names' is undoubtedly Keith, the snarling, sneering, psychopathic man-mountain from *Nano Breaker*. But *Trapt* runs him a close second with a litany of enemy guards bearing ill-conceived monikers – there are loads, but let's give a special welcome to Alan. And Moses. And, most of all, to Lionel. Names that inspire absolutely no fear whatsoever. Well done to all concerned.

Anyway, to *Trapt*: Princess, blah, demonic possession, blah, king assassinated, blah. The plot's merely a hanger on which to place a game that has no relevance to the story, and, if we're honest, little relevance to your life. It's a puzzler, of sorts, in which you get stuck in a room with a couple of guards, and can jab ◎ to pause the action and lay up to a whole three traps (giant rolling boulders, arrows fired out from the walls, bear pits, and so on) to lure them into. As the game progresses, you can buy better traps and, well, that's about it.

HE'S BEHIND YOU!

The thing is, the camera is useless. Like a lead-free pencil. Or a sofa made of talcum powder for people made out of glue. And matters are made about ten trillion times worse when you realise the game is all about *seeing what's behind you*. You need to get the guards to follow you and lure them into traps, yes? Difficult, then, when you can't see where they are – partly because of the crappy camera (you can adjust it with the right stick *and* R1 and L1, but it makes little difference) but also because a third-person perspective is only good *for seeing what's in front of you*. And don't get us started on how insane it all becomes in multi-tiered rooms, when you're expected to see what the enemies are doing, even though they're two floors up and behind you. What's that? A radar to see where they are? Oh, there's nothing like that. Don't be daft. So how on Earth can you be expected to kill the guards with your traps? Easy. They're utter divvies who blunder into peril time and time again, never once learning whereabouts your deadly blades (or whatever) are situated.

It's an original idea, *Trapt*, but the only way it could ever have worked is with an overhead viewpoint so, you know, you could see what the blazing hell was going on. Except then it'd probably be far too easy and we'd still hate it. Ultimately, *Trapt* is a classic example of an idea that should have been deemed unworkable long ago, and scrapped. It wasn't. And it is. **David Cook**

■ Trapt *is out now.*

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ It's a nice idea... – But it doesn't work. And, worse, it's horribly, horribly boring.	+ Nice slow-mo effect when enemies die. – The camera is the worst thing that ever existed.	+ Erm... – Not offensive, particularly, but utterly unmemorable.

LIFESPAN
Despite the difficulty-enhancing camera, *Trapt* is unbelievably easy. You'll race through it in a few hours tops.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
SPY VS SPY

IT'S WORSE THAN...
UNDER THE SKIN

Yep, it's Crapt. OK, there's no effort or thought in that joke, but not much effort or thought seems to have gone into the game, so why should we bother?

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INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: High Voltage
Publisher: 2K Games
Players: 1
Memory Save: 38KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

GAMEFAX

Platformer · For Kiddies · Shit · Film License

"ZATHURAAAARGH!"

DULL AS TEXAS: Yes. Well. Doesn't it look *so exciting*, huh? Wowzers.

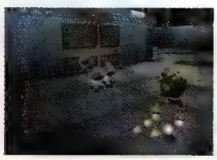
BOT OUT: Small boy. Robot. Wake us up when it's all over. Yawn.

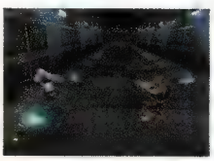
ZATHURA

That's 'zah-thoo-rah' – say it slowly and you'll look like the sort of fool who buys this rubbish.

How *Zathura* expects to take on platforming legends like Jak or Sly is a mystery to us. Actually, it doesn't intend to. This is the kind of game made on the cheap that only exists to take advantage of clueless oldies buying stuff for their sprogs who recognise the name. It's awful, and it doesn't care.

Zathura sticks safely to the film's script, with two brothers, Danny and Walter, finding a battered boardgame in their basement that transports them into deep space as soon as they begin to play. Outer space! Everyone loves space! Cool, right? Well, no, since *Zathura* is blindingly obvious in everything it does, from the idiot tasks (jump up stuff, find switches to open doors) to the last-millennium, old-gen visuals.





Identikit enemies like robots and lizard-men are taken to pieces by 'cunning tactics' like hammering the shoot button and strafing wildly, while your unlimited lives makes each dreary level a tedious exercise in trial-and-error. *Zathura* bears all the hallmarks of a tired, by-numbers kids' game, but the lack of control customisation, intelligent design or imagination in will have any child praying for grandma to come round and start talking about the Bible again. This would be an embarrassment on PSOne. Or even Master System. Tell any parent who'll listen. **Ben Richardson**

■ ***Zathura is out now. Should you want it.***

PSM² VERDICT

Blocky, awkward and creatively broken, *Zathura* is another lazy, cut-price movie tie-in that just isn't worth getting involved with.

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INFOSTRIP

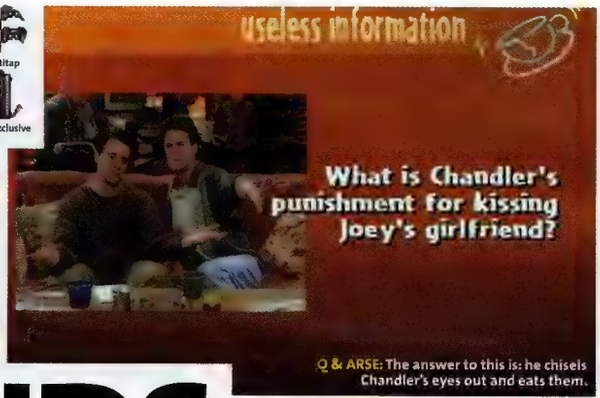
DETAILS

Developer: Warner Bros
Publisher: Warner Bros
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 98kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

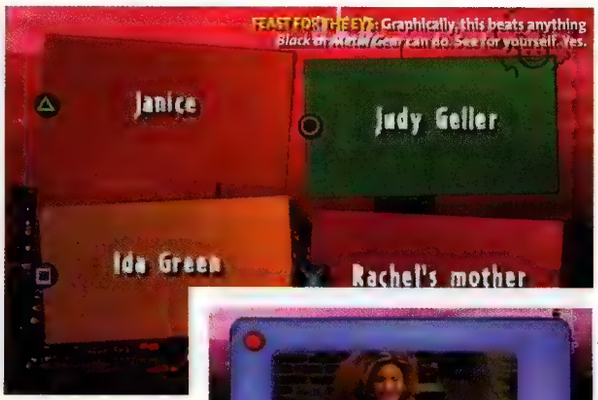
GAMEFAX

Official License · Multitap · Budget · PS2 Exclusive

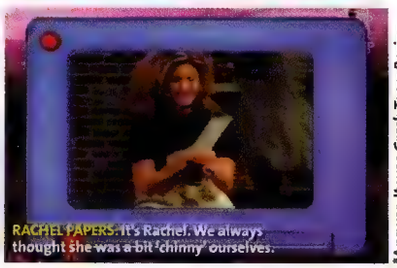
"OH. MY. GOD."



Q & ARSE: The answer to this is: he chisels Chandler's eyes out and eats them.



FEAST FOR THE EYE: Graphically, this beats anything Black or Metal Gear can do. See for yourself. Yes.



RACHEL PAPERS: It's Rachel. We always thought she was a bit 'chimmy' ourselves.

FRIENDS

THE ONE WITH ALL THE TRIVIA

Forget *Resi 4* and *GTA* – *this* is the game you bought your PS2 for. Then again, maybe not.

You don't want to admit it but *you like Friends*. Oh, yes, you do, because you fancy Rachel, quite fancy Monica when she's not being neurotic and for every cringe-inducing Ross moment there's a Joey and Chandler gag that makes you smile. Laugh, even. But that said, you're probably not so much of a fan that you'll want to fork out twenty quid on a quiz game containing three frikkin' thousand questions about the Friends gang and the latté-grande-two-sugars world they inhabit.

But, and excuse us for being presumptuous, your missus probably adores the series, and this is what makes the game so appealing. Rent a copy for her and her mates, sit them down in front of it and they'll be happy for three or so hours (before the questions start repeating too frequently) and you can nip off to the pub/sneak upstairs to watch Robo Death Ninjas 4 without getting into trouble.

It's well presented, with three difficulty settings and two different modes, the multi-player 'buzz in' mode somewhat ruined by the fact that it's fastest simply to hit the ⊗ button before the multi-choice answers even appear, rather than wait for the game to present you with the selection to begin with. The hosts – Janice, Gunther and the Gellers Snr – start to grate after, ooh, two minutes and the looping theme tune is a cruel and unusual punishment, but it's a decent evening's entertainment for Friends aficionados. And here's one for you: in The One With Monica's Thunder, Chandler is seen playing a PlayStation – what game was he playing?* **Nick Ellis**

■ ***Friends: TOWATT is out now.***

PSM² VERDICT

An ultra-niche and adequately designed quiz game with enough questions to keep you going for a couple of hours, but only really worth a rental.

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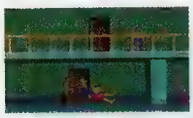
*Answer: It was *Crash Team Racing*.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Namco
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 343kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

GAMEFAX
Action · Driving · Budget · Old-skool



"CRAPPY ANNIVERSARY"

POLE VAULT: Oh look! It's *Pole Position!* And it's still rubbish! Wow! Mega!

EIGHT SHIT: This game was released shortly after the repeal of the corn laws.

OLD TIMER: This is an ancient game from the olden days. Still, Come on Eileen eh?

NAMCO MUSEUM: 50TH ANNIVERSARY

50th anniversary? But that means these games must have come out in 1956. It certainly feels that way.

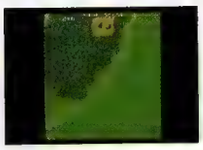
KICK THE HAD IT: This may have been good in 1956, but now it's a load of old muffcram.

This is where we either go "Brilliant! Loads of classic games! Fabbo!" or, more likely, "Pfft. Cynical cash-in." Well, *Namco Museum* is a bit of both. While *Midway Arcade Treasures 3* was a shallow compendium of truly woeful driving games, this contains some genuine landmark titles from the halcyon days of arcade gaming. There's *Pac-Man, Galaga, Dig Dug, Pole Position*, plus a handful of others that aren't really worth mentioning. *Dragon Spirit*, anyone? Crack open the Cristal!

We like the menu. You spin a magical wheel of 3D arcade machines around to select your game while Come On Eileen blares in the background. No, really. But fancy menus with '80s soundtracks are hardly novel, having been done already in *Atari Anthology*. So... the games then, eh? Well, you're basically asking us to review *Pac-Man*. Everyone in the world has played bloody *Pac-Man*. You know it's good. But would you seriously play it *now*?

And therein lies the major failing with most retro games. You stick them on for five minutes, go "ooh" and "aah" and then, except for those lonely nights when you're desperately trying to recall happier times, never play them again. Not that we ever have those. No. This *is* one of the better classics collections, but the fact remains that you're better off playing a proper game. **Andy Kelly**

■ **Namco Museum *is out on March 31st.***



PSM2 VERDICT

As far as retro collections go, you could do a lot worse than this. But there really isn't much margin for error, is there? Only for the truly nostalgia-obsessed.

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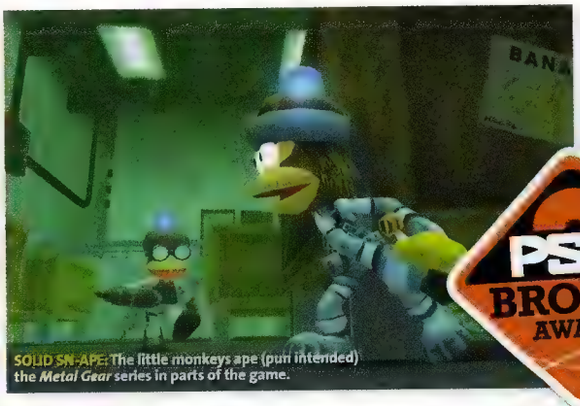
INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sony
Publisher: Sony
Players: 1
Memory Save: 118kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

GAMEFAX
Platform · For Kiddies · Sequel · Funny

"CHEEKY MONKEYS"



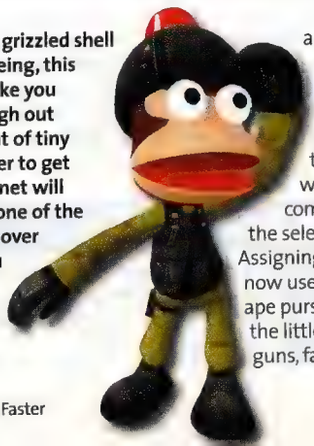
SOLID SN-APE: The little monkeys ape (pun intended) the *Metal Gear* series in parts of the game.

NET ME ENTERTAIN YOU: The comical little chimps can nick your tools and chase you with them.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

APE ESCAPE 3

The apes have escaped and they're running about. Grab your stun bat and knock those chimps out. Eat *that*, Keats.



Unless you're a grizzled shell of a human being, this game will make you smile and laugh out loud. The sight of tiny apes clambering over each other to get away from your giant monkey net will make you chuckle, and seeing one of the bulbous-eyed simians tripping over its wedding dress will have you positively beaming.

The third in the series of sees you playing as either Sayaka or Soturo – two equally annoying adolescents with penchant for locking up the hairy hell-raisers. This time the apes are controlling TV stations so that they can hypnotise the world and take over. Whereas the previous instalments were without much variety, *Ape Escape 3* comes packed with new features – like the selection of gadgets at your disposal. Assigning them to the face buttons, you can now use catapults, radars and more in your ape pursuits. And you'll need them because the little chimps have different abilities (like guns, fast running and the like) to elude you.

The most impressive thing about *Ape Escape 3* is the variety on offer. One minute you're fighting a robot elephant controlled by monkeys, the next you're slipping into medieval armour and lamping them with a giant bashing bar. You can even blast around in your own robot or even a super-fast (and difficult to handle) car.

But when it comes to the crunch, *Ape Escape 3* is lacking that killer 'one more go' factor to keep you hooked for the entire 28 stages, somehow gets samey despite the variety, and has a shocking camera. But who doesn't like laughing at monkeys dressed as Superman, eh? **Nathan Irvine**

■ **Ape Escape 3 *is out on March 24th.***

PSM2 VERDICT

Like sugary foods, kids will lap this up no problem. There's enough to keep you busy for a while, but ultimately there's not enough to it to keep you going.

71

coming soon.
your new favourite game site.
FROM THE CREATORS OF
PSM2

Continue
FT
Inter 0
FT
3 Man Utd
Name Cn Rt Gl
Júlio César 91 4 -
M. Materazzi (c) 79 7 -
W. Samuel 82 7 -
I. Córdoba 78 7 -
D. Stankovic 74 8 -
Zé Maria 72 6 -
E. Cambiasso 79 5 -
D. Pizarro 77 7 -
J. Cruz (76) 88 7 -
Á. Recoba (56) 80 7 -
O. Martins 76 7 -
E. van der Sar (c) 95 8 -
G. Heinze 83 7 1
G. Neville 82 6 -
M. Silvestre 85 7 -
R. Ferdinand 84 7 -
A. Duscher 80 7 -
Cristiano Ronaldo 78 7 -
W. Rooney 75 7 -
K. Nolan 82 8 1
R. van Nistelrooy 76 8 1
G. Rossi (75) 93 7 -
Select
Home Tactics
Away Tactics

The MON£Y $HOT

The blood, sweat and tears finally pay off as you guide your team to the most coveted prize in Europe – the Champions League trophy. Amazing!

WHAT'S IN WHAT'S OUT

Anyone who hasn't just stepped from the womb will know that *Football Manager* is a massive game on PC and Mac. And that's absolutely brilliant. So which features – if any – have made the cut and which have been ditched for the PSP's

WHAT	YES/NO
Believable engine	✔
Correct player and club names	✔
Streams of spreadsheets containing numbers and letters	✔
Interaction with players via set text options	✘
Multi-player	✘
Extensive squads (i.e. reserve, youth etc)	✘
2D match engine	✘
Fully customisable tactics	✘
Ability to play mind games via the media	✘
Sense of achievement	✔

SOME OF A PITCH: This is the familiar tactics screen where you tweak you team around.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD

In terms of management titles on all formats, it's one of the worst. As PSP goes, it's the best. Funny old game.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sports Int
Publisher: Sega
Players: 1
Memory Save: 1072KB

GAMEFAX
Sports
Management
Addictive
Hard

TRIVBURST
- Seven countries to ply your expertise within.
- Track your career progress as you march towards legend status.
- Trawl an extensive list in the transfer market..

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho first job was as assistant to Sir Bobby Robson at Porto and then at Barcelona."

This is strange. On the one hand, Sports Interactive's footie venture on PSP feels as empty and dry as an alcoholic's hip flask. But on the other it's easily one of the most enjoyable management games we've ever played. Veterans of the *Football Manager* series, however, will froth at the mouth as you see how many key features you're missing from the PC version. The transfer system has been streamlined to the point where you can't even exchange players to make up for your lack of funds and there's no reserve team. Heck, you can't even view a match report to check key moments of previous games. But when you sit down and really get to grips with *Football Manager Handheld* and these minor fractions will fade to oblivion. You'll be too busy fretting over the five million you've just splurged on Djibril Cisse to worry about minor flaws. It's five million more than he's worth.

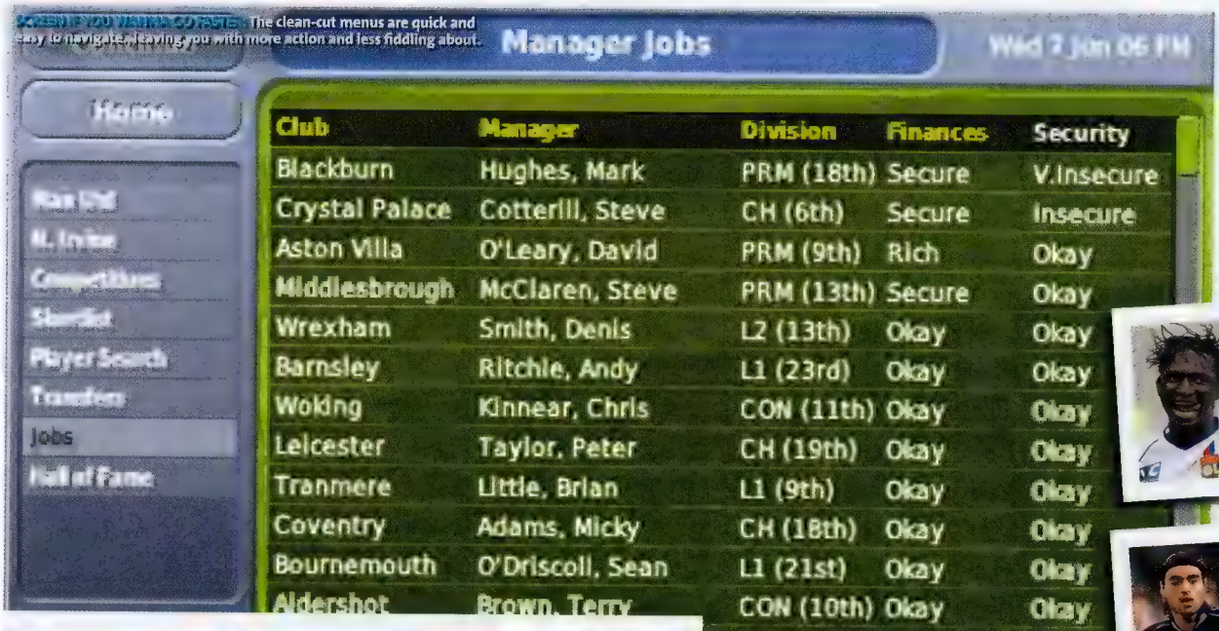
English Premier Division
Competition Records - 2005/06
Most team points Arsenal - 94
Most team goals Liverpool - 86
Most team conceded Sunderland - 75
Most team bookings Charlton - 49
Most team red cards Man Utd - 8
Biggest home win Arsenal 5 - 0 Blackburn (8/2/06)
Biggest away win West Ham 0 - 5 Liverpool (17/12/05)

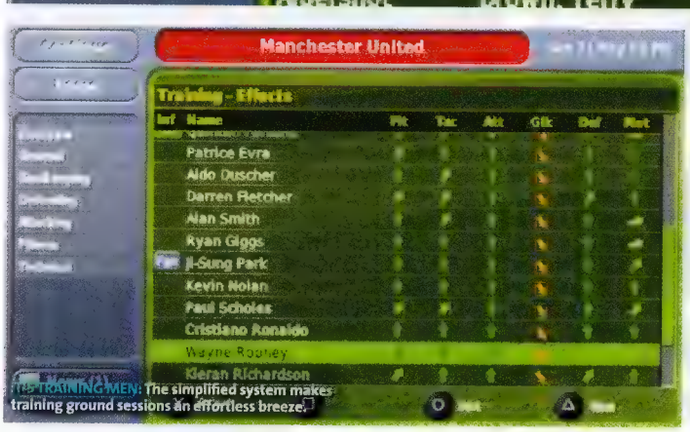
STATS THE WAY I LIKE IT: You can track all the vital info that you like thanks to the extensive database.

Almost as oddly as parting with cash for Liverpool's goal shy miss-man, *Football Manager Handheld* kicks-off at the beginning of the current 2005-2006 season, but with all the moves from this January's transfer window. Vidic is at Man Yoo, Walcott's at Arsenal and half of the Spurs team are at Portsmouth. It feels weird, but it sort of makes sense.

READY TO GO

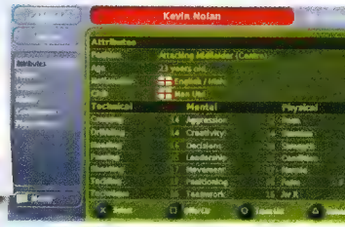
From the outset, *FM Handheld* feels accessible. A couple of menu clicks later and you're ready. You can only manage a single country's teams throughout your career, rather than, for instance, being plucked from League Two obscurity to manage Inter Milan. Shame. But PSP's not exactly full of memory and you get a solid match engine in return – more on that later.


SCREEN IF YOU WANNA GO FAST: The clean-cut menus are quick and easy to navigate, leaving you with more action and less fiddling about.
Manager Jobs
Wed 7 Jun 06 PM
Home
Jobs
Hall of Fame
Club | Manager | Division | Finances | Security
Blackburn | Hughes, Mark | PRM (18th) | Secure | V.Insecure
Crystal Palace | Cotterill, Steve | CH (6th) | Secure | Insecure
Aston Villa | O'Leary, David | PRM (9th) | Rich | Okay
Middlesbrough | McClaren, Steve | PRM (13th) | Secure | Okay
Wrexham | Smith, Denis | L2 (13th) | Okay | Okay
Barnsley | Ritchie, Andy | L1 (23rd) | Okay | Okay
Woking | Kinnear, Chris | CON (11th) | Okay | Okay
Leicester | Taylor, Peter | CH (19th) | Okay | Okay
Tranmere | Little, Brian | L1 (9th) | Okay | Okay
Coventry | Adams, Micky | CH (18th) | Okay | Okay
Bournemouth | O'Driscoll, Sean | L1 (21st) | Okay | Okay
Aldershot | Brown, Terry | CON (10th) | Okay | Okay
Sort



DIARRA: His wage demands were high and he was rubbish. We sold him to Villa for £3m.

DUSCHER: Was busy in midfield and got red-carded twice. An ideal replacement, then.



NOLAN: Not the best choice for that position, but he bagged 25 goals. Nice one.

©Empics, Corbis

KEANE AND ABLE

So... people keep asking just who will be the next Roy Keane? The answer is simple... no-one. He's his own player. Still this didn't stop us from testing out three potential 'engines' for United's midfield. Step forward Aldo Duscher (Deportivo), Mahamadou Diarra (Lyon) and unlikely candidate Kevin Nolan (Bolton). So how did they fare in *FM Handheld*?

After settling into your team's dugout you'll initially be disappointed at the lack of intricate options. Most frustrating of the lot is the fact that you can't dabble with your team's formation. You're forced to choose one of 17, and unlike *Championship Manager PSP* you can't draw on directional arrows for passes or runs. You can still give a player instructions like run right/left/centre, mind, but you can't even move your players around the pitch to customise your formations.

However, the developers have trimmed things for good reason – the match engine. Here's a fundamentally sound piece of software that mimics real football in its purest form. Apart from watching aghast as Alex Ferguson took the reigns of lowly Doncaster, everything else feels true and observed. So don't worry about absurd transfer action, like Quinton Fortune being incessantly romanced by the likes of Chelsea and AC Milan – he's rather more likely to be shipped out on loan to Wolves, just like in real life. While we're on the subject, however, you can't recall players from loan so be careful who you farm out. And so long as you don't go all Souness and put out the same useless side every week, you won't be getting randomly drummed by lower quality teams every match.

With so much emphasis on bread and butter management, *FM Handheld* should wind up being lacklustre. But it isn't. The magic distilled in its core delivers an accurate and entertaining football experience thanks to its extensive database of players, clubs and competitions. Even without a 2D pitch of Smartie-esque players, *FM Handheld* stokes your imagination and you end up creating your own stories (Saha owes his career to us – we fantasize about giving him a big hug, the amount of winning goals he's scored) although Rooney whinging about being dropped for a single game almost shatters that illusion. The fact is that while there's a lack of 'bells and whistles' to distract you from the main game, *Football Manager Handheld* is confident of its delivery and gives you exactly what you need. You won't find a more enjoyable managerial game anywhere else and, given the continually improving PC game, we're certain that *FM Handheld* will be in for a similarly long and illustrious managerial career on PSP. **Nathan Irvine**

■ *FM Handheld kicks off from April 13th.*

"LACKS BELLS AND WHISTLES, BUT FM IS VERY CONFIDENT OF ITS DELIVERY"

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Every decision makes you feel in complete control. – It's just stat management. No more, no less.	+ Sharp and stylish menus are easy to navigate. – Where are the little dots running around a 2D pitch?	+ Er... there's a clicking sound when you, well, click. – Seriously, there's nothing else apart from that..

LIFESPAN

With so many different teams to choose from – each offering a new managerial experience – you'll be coming back to this for months.

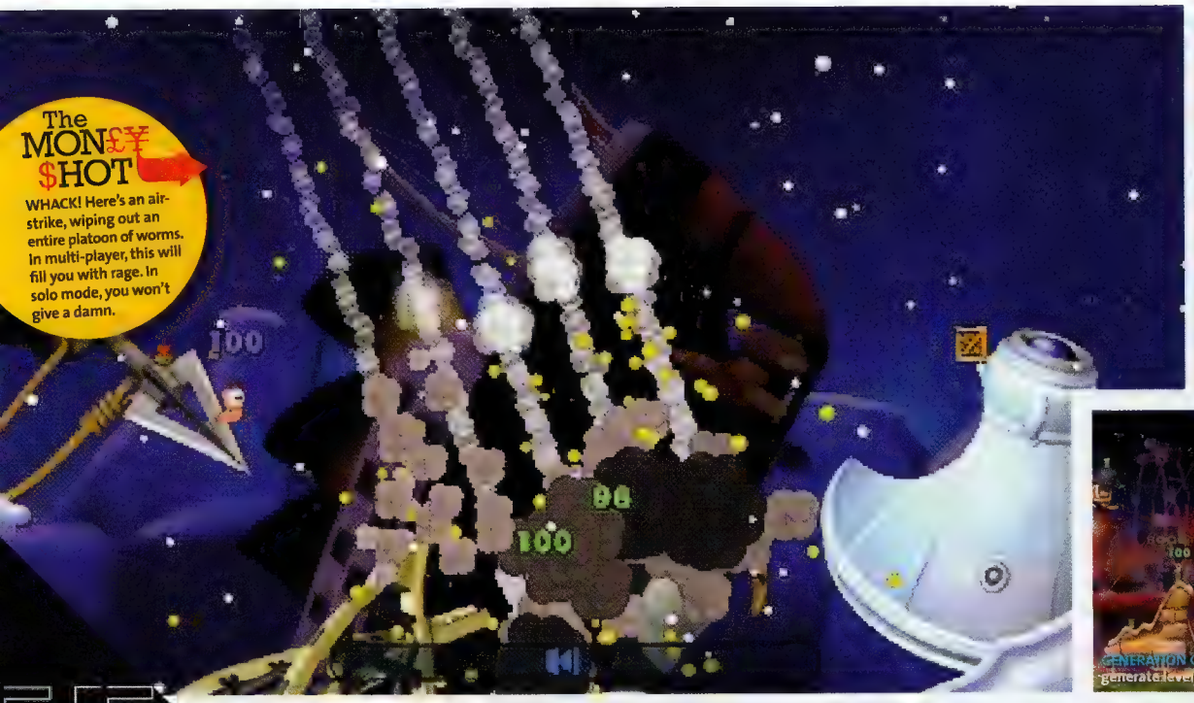
MINUTES ... YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CHAMP MAN PSP

IT'S WORSE THAN...
PES5

As a no-frills footie management game that feels properly solid, *FM Handheld* is seriously hard to beat. A great first attempt at portable Mourinho-ing from Sports Interactive.

80



The MONEY SHOT
WHACK! Here's an air-strike, wiping out an entire platoon of worms. In multi-player, this will fill you with rage. In solo mode, you won't give a damn.

TORCHED EARTH: The worm in the middle's using a blowtorch to tunnel.

GENERATION GAME: You can tap in numbers to generate levels randomly. If you feel like it.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Team 17
Publisher: THQ
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 89kb

GAMEFAX
Sequel | Old School | Funny | Network Play

TRIVBURST
- Blow up worms.
- Just like you've been doing for the last decade.
- But on PSP, with Wi-Fi.
- The usual load of weapons, including exploding sheep.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Darwin wrote a book on 'The Formation Of Mould, Through The Actions Of Worms, With Observations On Their Habits.'"

WORMS: OPEN WARFARE

Beating your worm on your own gets a bit dull – so invite a mate to do it for you! Where are you going?

There are many interesting things about worms. The slow-worm, for example, isn't a worm at all, but a lizard. The study of parasitic worms is called Helminthology. There's a species called the Peanut worm. Dennis Rodman's nickname is 'The Worm'. Wrestler Scotty 2 Hotty's finishing move is the Worm. The biggest sandworms in the movie Dune were 20 miles long. OK, not all these facts are *that* interesting, but they're a damn sight more absorbing than playing *Worms: Open Warfare*. In single-player mode, at least.

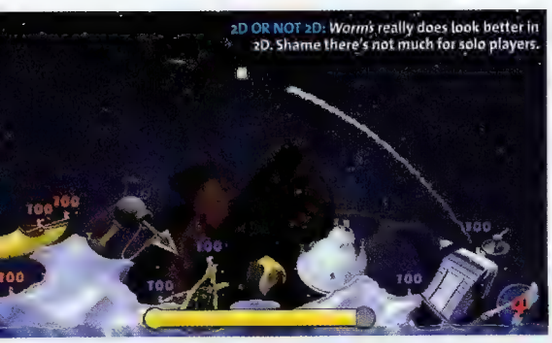
You all know how *Worms* works. You get a team of four of said creatures, and attempt to batter a computer or human-controlled team (or teams) into submission with a variety of 'insane' weaponry, from bazookas to grenades, air-strikes to exploding sheep. You each take turns to have a pot-shot at an opposition worm and, well, that's about it. In recent years, Team 17 have taken the series into 3D with mixed (ie. mainly crap) results. On PSP, fortunately, *Worms* is back in glorious 2D-o-vision and all the better for it.

ON YOUR OWN

But at least 3D *Worms* games had something approaching a single-player mode. Here, all you get is to play matches against the computer over and over again, which is all well and good, but gets really boring, really fast. Perhaps you could fall back on challenge mode for solo thrills? Nah. This simply puts you in yet more four-on-four battles, but the more you win, the more accurate your opponents become and the more punishment they can take. Note to Team 17: *This is almost exactly the same as the main game.* Give us a goal. Give us a point to actually playing the bloody thing. *Please.*

Still, in multi-player, *Worms* is as good as ever. Watching in anguish as your entire wormy battalion is wiped out by an air-strike, or cackling as you launch a perfect bazooka shot across the width of the playing area to win the match is still fun. But if you plan to get this for solo play only, well, you might as well buy The Big Book Of Worm Facts instead. It'd be more diverting. **David Cook**

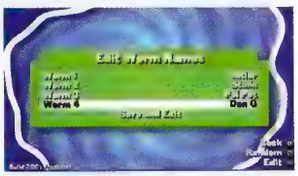
■ Open Warfare *is out March 17th.*



2D OR NOT 2D: *Worms* really does look better in 2D. Shame there's not much for solo players.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One vaguely-engaging thing you can do is customise your worms. Well, by 'customise' we mean 'change their names'. Still. This way, you can have teams themed on the Beatles, say, or four-elevenths of the West Brom squad. Although what you'll actually do is name your entire squad with swear words. You lot are so predictable. It makes us weep.



DIC-TAC-TOE: **The world's most evil dictators take on a new, wormy form. Boo, hiss!**

YOU WORMS! **Dan G's missing. Plotting to make us all start work at 6am, no doubt.**

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Often glorious in Wi-Fi mode...	+ Crisp, cartoony and blessedly old-school. No needless 3D here.	+ High-pitched squeaks and squeals during battle/
– ...Duller than a craft fair when played alone.	– They do the job. No moans.	– They can get on the annoying side, though.

LIFESPAN
These three bars are for multi-player action only. In solo mode, there's less to do than in, for instance, Rotherham.
MINUTES — GAME

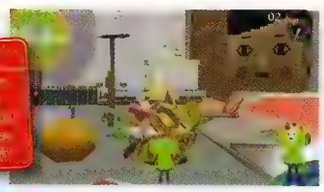
IT'S BETTER THAN...
FRANTIX

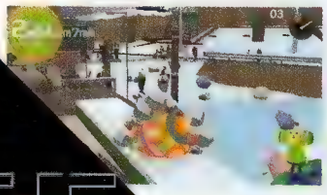
IT'S WORSE THAN...
LEMMINGS

Good fun with a mate, but *staggeringly* empty in solo mode. Buying this to play alone is like getting a pack of cards just for Solitaire. Except cards are about a quid, and this is 30 times that.

63

The MON£¥ $HOT
Seems a bit mean, stealing toys from a kid's bedroom. It'll make him hate the world and join a happy-slapping gang. And it'll be your fault.





ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

The hub of *Me & My Katamari* is represented by a series of small islands. From these, you can find another homeless animal who needs your help, look at a database of *every single thing* you've rolled up with your katamari – and that's a lot of things – buy new clobber for your character (or even become a new one, should you have tracked down one of his cousins in the main game) and, well, loads of other fun little things. If only all games paid as much attention to presentation as *Me & My Katamari*, we'd all be better off.

ISLE BE BACK: Each island feature links to something new. And probably bizarre.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Namco
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 154kb

GAMEFAX
Addictive
Jap Curio
Original
Hard

TRIVBURST
- Roll people and animals into balls for fun and profit. And malice.
- Up to four players.
- See the thousands of objects you pick up in your Katamari scrapbook.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The music in this game features vocals from popular Japanese stars like Yui Asaka. Pisses all over James Blunt, for sure."

ME & MY KATAMARI

Right, insert your own predictable 'sticky balls' joke here. Then play one of the most fun PSP games in ages.

OK, first things first – if you haven't played *We Love Katamari* on PS2, do that before you go anywhere near *Me & My Katamari*. Otherwise, what'll happen is this: you'll start the game and immediately find it near-uncontrollable. ↑ and Ⓐ to move forwards? ← and ⓡ to sidestep left and → and ◎ to sidestep right? Why not just D-pad directions? Double tap ◎ and ← simultaneously to flick round 180 degrees? Christ on a moped. What they've done, see, is mapped PS2's right stick onto the analogue buttons, but if you've not played *Katamari* on PS2, you simply won't comprehend what's going on. Even when you've played for hours, and no matter how familiar you are with *My Katamari*'s big brother, there'll still be moments when you get jammed in a corner and are utterly unable to manoeuvre your way out of it.

"THERE'S NOTHING LIKE ROLLING OVER A FLOCK OF PENGUINS"

But once you've figured the controls out, it's business as usual – the King of Space (our dream job) has charged you to roll your katamari ball around, and use its stickiness to gather up trees, people, buildings, elephants or whatever. Then he'll take your results, and use them to make islands upon which, erm, a load of homeless animals will live. Yes.

And it's great. There are few experiences quite like rolling a sticky ball over a flock of penguins, a few boats, some unsuspecting passers-by and then some houses, enjoying everyone's horrified – yet comical – screams of terror and jigging along to The Greatest Game Music Ever. Forget all yer gangster rubbish in the likes of *New York: Ghetto Bumwipe XXX* – sonically, this is where it's at, with the sort of chirpy tunes that hardwire themselves into your brain permanently.

LITTLE AND LARGE

But there's always a but, and *My Katamari*'s 'but' is that there's not a whole lot of variety going on. The game's very keen on making you replay levels you've already seen, only in new 'weathers' or with different sized balls – so if you're massive, you'll be able to pick up all the buildings, and if you're tiny, just the litter on the streets. The perspective changes, but the location won't and it's a bit disappointing when you're sent to the same world for the umpteenth time. Not only that, if you've played other versions to death, you'll have seen it all before.

Not one to play for long sessions, then, but in short bursts you can avoid said repetition. It's a shame it's there at all, but besides that, *Me & My Katamari* is a great, stupid, fun game that'll make you feel happy. What more do you want? **David Cook**

■ *Import* **Me & My Katamari *now.***

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Hilarious, addictive, and laugh-out-loud funny. – Controls are never quite comfy. Sadly repetitive.	+ Colourful, crisp, cartoony and perfect for the game. – Camera can occasionally go a bit barmy in corners.	+ Game music as game music should always be. – We refuse to be negative in any way on this score.

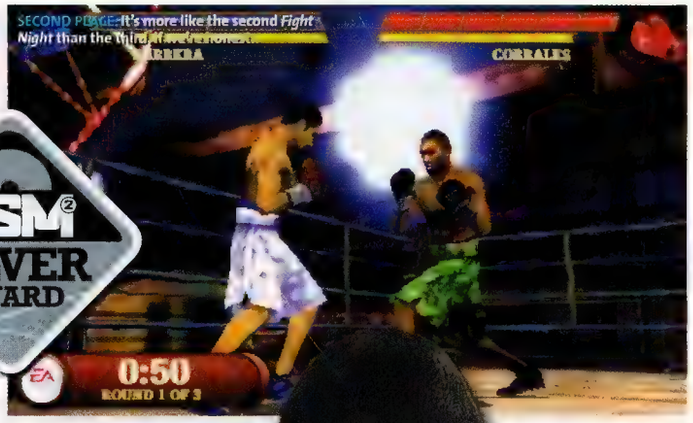
LIFESPAN
Massively addictive, and with Wi-Fi play, though the lack of variety might mean you get bored after a while.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
LEMMINGS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
LUMINES

***Me & My Katamari* is terrific fun, though sadly let down by dodgy controls and the repetition of environments. Still, in short bursts, it's one of the best games you'll get for your PSP.**

81

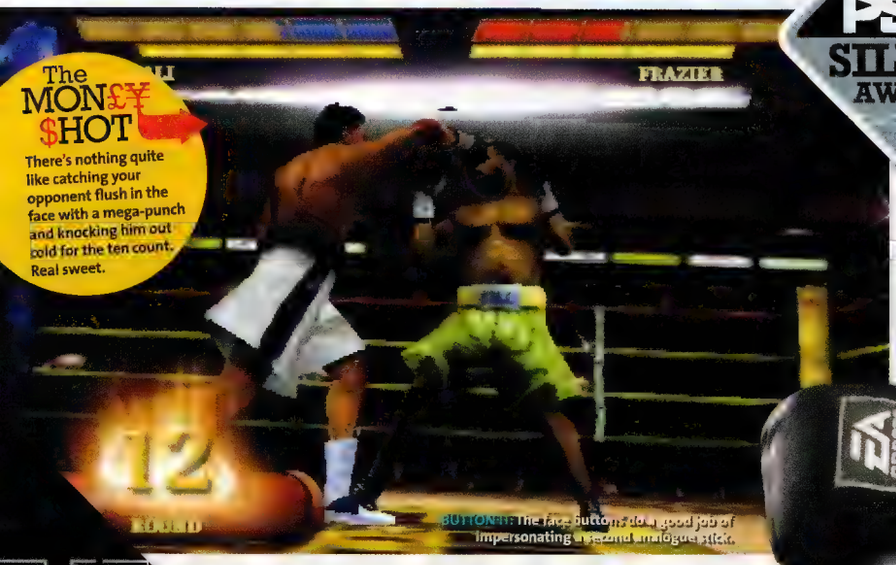


SECOND PLACE: It's more like the second *Fight Night* than the third of anything.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

The MON£Y $HOT

There's nothing quite like catching your opponent flush in the face with a mega-punch and knocking him out cold for the ten count. Real sweet.



BUTTONS: The face buttons do a good job of impersonating a second analogue stick.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1 - 2
Memory Save: 53KB

GAMEFAX

Beat 'em-up | Official License | Violent | Network

TRIVBURST

- Wi-Fi compatibility for head-to-head battles
- Full career mode with an in-depth create-a-character mode.
- Fight as Hatton, Ali, Jones and more.

PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Mike Tyson always wore black shorts during his bouts as a mark of his condolences for his late trainer, Cus d'Amato."

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

EA's classic boxing series drops down to featherweight for its PSP debut, but it still batters all-comers.

The *Fight Night* series has KO'd all contenders for its beat-em up crown. With the innovative Total Punch Control™ system (it lets you swing the analogues as if they were your boxer's arms) the franchise goes from strength to strength. But despite PSP having only one analogue stick, EA have still served up a near-perfect port of *Fight Night*.

There aren't any Flash KO's or stun punches and to be honest, pulling off a haymaker is a fairly random business too. Rather than tweak back the stick and feeling it rumble when it's primed for a knockout blow, you've got to time your button press as an on-screen glove flashes to indicate maximum power. It's tricky to say the least. But once you get used to timing your swing you'll be introducing fist to face with brutal and devastating effect.

We were hoping for PS2 to PSP linkage, but sadly this is not to be, so there's no chance to train or continue your career between platforms. Shame. But regardless of that, *Fight Night Round 3* is a well-balanced slugfest and rightly deserves its PSP championship belt.

■ *Fight Night Round 3* is taking the Championship belt now.

"ONCE YOU'RE USED TO THE TIMING, YOU'LL INTRODUCE FIST TO FACE BRUTALLY"

So what's different? Well, apart from the aforementioned, this episode is more akin to *Round 2* than its name suggests. So rather than the new stadiums found in *Round 3* on PS2, you'll be slugging it out in familiar surroundings from last year's version, such as the plush Viceroy and the outdoor County circus. However,

WHAT'S GONE?

Elsewhere, inevitable streamlining has also taken place. The respect meter and fight reports have been cut from the career mode; so have the training minigames.

HISTORY LESSON

EA are consistently keen to add extras to PSP titles, and *Fight Night Round 3* is no exception. Aside from the quick play and career modes, you also get Classic Match. This is where you can recreate historic fights. For example, the classic Rumble in the Jungle bout between Ali and Frazier is here, so you can emulate The Greatest's victory or turn the tables as Smokin' Joe and smash his face in. It's your choice. You're even rewarded with special garments after each fight. Snazzy.

HISTORY RE-BEATING: You can recreate all your favourite bouts of face-smashing.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Solid action which remains fresh and entertaining. - It's just boxing... no more, no less.	+ Bold and detailed fighters look incredible. - The shadow trails as you throw punches.	+ All the vicious grunts and groans you'd expect - The soundtrack is full of cheap hip-hop.

LIFESPAN

The career mode is extensive and will keep you more than occupied, plus there's the chance to smack your mate around too.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
SMACKDOWN VS. RAW

IT'S WORSE THAN...
NOTHING

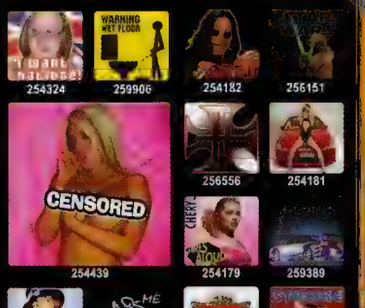
If you only buy one fighting game for PSP, then *Fight Night* is the one for you. You'll be amazed by the visuals and satisfied by how well its been converted. The best beat-'em-up on PSP yet.

84

DB Mob

ORDER 1 GET 1 - NO CON

WALLPAPERS

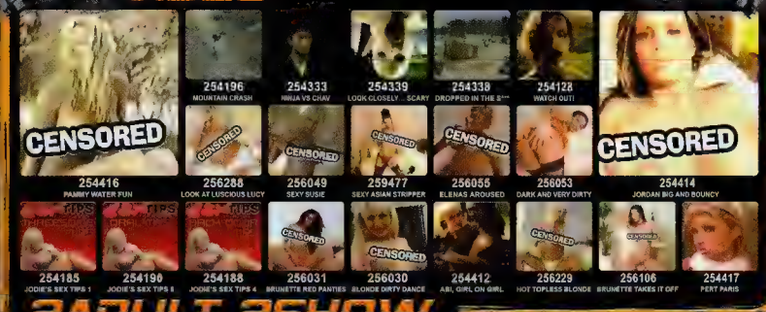


254324 259906 254182 256151 256556 254181 254439 254179 259389 259229 259883 259977 259503 259203 259496 256683 256737 259716 259663 254438 256761 256543

2ADULT 2SHOW

REAR END ROOTING	SWALLOW THIS	CROTCH-LESS PANTIES BRUNETTE	SAUCY DUO RUBBING	
259731	259732	256867	256842	
CLOSE UP GIRL FUN	UP CLOSE GIRL BITS	CLOSE UP FROM BEHIND	EAT THIS	
259162	256345	259709	256915	

VIDEO



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BENT OVER & READY	BLONDE MOUTHFUL	256408 - GIRL ON GIRL ORAL 256407 - TOYING GIRL 256406 - GIRL ON GIRL CLOSE UP ORAL 256405 - A WOMAN AND HER TOY 256404 - BLONDE ON BLONDE ACTION
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256414	256413	
FROM BEHIND	BLONDE REAR FUN	256399 - REAR ENTRY FUN 256398 - WIDE LOAD 256397 - A HANDY GIRL 256396 - 3 WAY FUN 256395 - BLOND IN PINK UNDERWEAR SOLO 256394 - CLOSE UP FUN 256393 - BIG PINK TOY
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The MON£¥ $HOT

Jetpacks, helicopters and London – what more could you want? Flameproof pants? Actually, that's good thinking.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

For those who found the PS2 game disappointing, there's now a portable version. Of your disappointment.

Average height, average build, extraordinary ability – that's James Bond. Unfortunately, by the time he's been transferred to the land of games, his extraordinary skills become average. Everyone in games has extraordinary skills. Which just leaves James as average. Depressingly so.

Hence, perhaps, the panic to create a James Brand™ around it all: your zoom function is called Bond Focus, as if it were some unique innovation. You have numerous official Bond Moments where you're officially being just like Bond. Not that you weren't before, of course.

This could still have been brilliant, but sadly EA seems to have worked with considerable determination to create something – yep – average. Some of *From Russia With Love* is fun, much is passable and a wedge of it is awful. If you played the recent PS2 version you'll know exactly which bits, too, as this is identical in every meaningful way.

In fact, bar a small drop in detail and occasionally blurry backgrounds, it looks almost exactly the same too. OK, the PS2 version wasn't too sexy in the first place, but it's mostly smooth and colourful, except when it slows to a crawl – when there are too many hedges and not enough invisible walls to deal with, for instance. Yet it should at least impress the headcase at the bus stop before he stabs you. Not for your copy, because he's already bought one. Just for fun.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: EA Redwood Shores
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-6
Memory Save: 128kb

GAMEFAX

Film tie-in | Official license | Stupid | Action/Adventure

TRIVBURST

- The PSP gets a new Q-Dart weapon, plus an 'exciting' new rifle.
- Other than that, exactly the same as the PS2 version in every way.
- Such is life.

PUBTALK

"Cynics might say this chance to fix *FRWL*'s problems has been wasted, and token novelties added instead. They'd be right."

ALL NEW? ALMOST.

Actually, this is nearly exactly the same as the PS2 version, despite that not being all that good. Being thrown a few tokens such as the Q-Dart, blurrier textures and arthritis-like pains hardly helps us feel better about the wasted opportunity for improvement. Actual pain? We rapidly developed a Margaret Thatcher-ish claw from constantly holding L1 to target while using that super-low-down analogue nub.

OLDFINGER: Some bits have an authentic '60s sheen, but weapon upgrades are 'new'. Cough.

OOOH, VERY JAMES BOND

Tricky moment, this. A gypsy hostage is being held upstairs in a building where the ground floor is full of gas. What to do? Fortunately, the resourceful 'travellers' keep a rack of gas masks not 20 feet away, on the outside of a cart. Just like any gypsy would. So you take one of those. And that's it. It mysteriously 'wears out' and disappears, of course, so you have to do things at a run, but it's always easier to ignore stealth and do that anyway. You're having a Bond Moment! Clever you!

MASK OF SORROW: This is about as cerebral as the puzzles get. Now that you can't see his face, James is probably sobbing uncontrollably.

HEDGETARIAN: The maze section is a brilliant opportunity to show off the hopeless camera.

HIGH CAMP: Sort of just like the film, only not. We don't remember that big green hoop, for starters.

But don't get the impression *FRWL* is wildly exciting. It suffers constantly from the incompatibility of its two main ideas – it's both desperate to please (everyone) and desperate not to offend (anyone). Even if you're not touchy enough to find deliberate inoffensiveness actively offensive, you're going to find its by-the-numbers, hand-holding niceness irritating.

JIMMY RIDDLE

From the off, it pulls its punches. The first level sees you leaping from chandelier to chandelier in the Houses of Parliament, which sounds brilliantly exciting. But the chandeliers are vast squares bounded by invisible walls in case anybody nearly falls off, and the leaps occur automatically when you stand on the blue dot and press ⊗. There's no skill involved and no way not to pull off this incredible feat, which is consequently not incredible at all. Just in case anyone falls off.

And so it skips from driving to flying to shooting to stealth to gadgetry without ever having the nerve to really nail any particular experience. Or even provide one that's fresh in any way... you know, in case somebody realises they're in unfamiliar territory and doesn't like it. So each section is exactly how you expect it to be, because essentially you've played them all before in some other game. Quite possibly in *Everything Or Nothing*.

But despite this, *FRWL* can still amuse, in much the same way as a burger and fries can satisfy despite having the nutritional value of frost, inseparable textures and the calorific value of a whale. Actually, perhaps a better analogy is this: it's not Bond, it's a straight-to-video knock off. It's Jean Claude Van Damme.

Lucky owners can share all this with the Wi-Fi, which includes three new maps for the jetpack dogfighting and brogue-based deathmatching. There's a smattering of PSP-exclusive (wooooooo!) stuff, such as new baddies and a dart gun, but none of it changes anything.

In its element *FRWL* provides basic shooting, twitchy driving and arthritic 'stealth' which those in an undemanding mood will enjoy. The AI is as human as a radio dial, but you can upgrade your guns for a bigger bang. The driving is floaty and fake, but enemy cars fly for miles and explode. It features Natasha Bedingfield, but it's got the creaking voice of Sean Connery as well. He's still not dead! Who knew?

Approach this with low or no expectations and you might have some fun: cleverly, EA has sought to nurture just such a feeling with previous Bonds such as *GoldenEye Rogue Agent*. But dive in expecting anything like the actual *From Russia With Love*, or like Ian Fleming's James Bond, or like a good shooter, or a good stealth game, and the jittery loon at the bus stop with the knife will be you. Yes, it will. **Steve Williams**

From Russia With Love is out now.

"IT'S NOT BOND, IT'S A STRAIGHT-TO-VIDEO KNOCK-OFF. IT'S VAN DAMME"

DOUBLE OH: Disappointed by the party, Timeshade made his pool cue hover for a bit.

PSM VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Exactly the same as it was before. – In other words, not particularly good.	+ Smooth and colourful, we suppose. – Merely average in every other way.	+ Authentic Bond music... – ... that blares at you constantly in case you forget how it goes.

LIFESPAN

There's no reason to play this twice, and only a tenuous one to play it once.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...

CODED ARMS

IT'S WORSE THAN...

SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS

A disappointingly straight port of a mediocre game, *From Russia With Love* is a mere diversion – temporary, awkwardly forgettable and here to occupy a place in the PSP's product portfolio.

60

The MON£¥ $HOT

Why isn't life more like *OutRun*. The open road, your girl at your side, all-round feeling of joy in your heart. Sigh. We could practically eat this picture.

CLASS VEGAS: Just looking at this makes us want to play the game again. Right now.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Sumo Digital
Publisher: Sega
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 87kb

GAMEFAX

Driving
Addictive
Easy
Network Play

TRIVBURST

- One the most memorable soundtracks in game history.
- Race against a mate in Wi-Fi mode.
- Make your lady happy in heart attack mode.

PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"In Donnie Darko, you can see Donnie playing the original *OutRun* arcade machine while he argues with his girlfriend."

OUTRUN 2006 COAST 2 COAST

Size isn't everything. A maxim that applies perfectly to the short-but-great *OutRun 2006*, but not us *in any way*.

***OutRun 2006* is like dating that girl you see every Friday down the Duck and Mattress. She's the most beautiful thing, and when you pluck up the courage to speak to her, you'll find she's also incredibly good fun. Peer a bit below the surface and you'll find she's a bit shallow, but when you're enjoying yourself this much, you don't care – you just hop on for another ride. *Car ride* that is. *OutRun*'s about cars, remember? Ferraris in fact. And not sex. No.**

attempt to get to each checkpoint before the timer ticks down. Do so, and you can turn left or right (which represent easier or harder stages) and keep going. Fail, and, well, that's it.

FUN AND DUSTED

And that's basically the entire main game. But you'll hardly notice how barely-there it really is – you'll just head back and go again, because it's such sheer, magical fun, from its ridiculous powersliding through to its gleefully colourful graphics and you can hurtle into a barrier only for the game to place you back on the track with no loss of speed, which might not be to everyone's taste. And, although there are a lot of challenges to play, they're very much of a muchness and *might* get samey.

OK, it's shallow – but that's more blessing than curse, allowing you to pick the game up and fall under its spell immediately. It might not last too long, but, while it does it'll be a love affair like you've never known. You won't be needing that girl down the pub for a while. You might not even need the pub. **David Cook**

■ Coast 2 Coast *is out on March 31st.*

HEART TO HEART

The other game mode is Heart Attack, where your aim – as in life – is to impress a girl. Unlike in real life, you do this by, for instance, driving through a load of ghosts. Or pushing a giant ball of wool down the track. Or ploughing through a stash of coins. All of this earns you hearts, and the more you get, the higher your ranking at the end – which means you can unlock more cars. It's great fun, but we do think there could have been a wider range of tasks to enjoy.

IDES OF ARCH: **Drive through the arches and make your woman happy. Romance, eh?**

"SHALLOW, BUT SHEER FUN. OUTRUN 2006 REALLY IS HYPNOTICALLY ABSORBING"

OutRun on PSP, like on PS2, is a combination of both *OutRun 2* on Xbox and *OutRun SP* in the arcades, offering you all the courses from both. Which means you've got one of the finest racing games ever to play in the garden, on the beach or, if you want to break some sort of 'fourth wall' of irony, in the car. So you pick your motor, select your soundtrack (from gaming's second-best selection of tunes, behind *Katamari*), and continual changes of environment, which all look absolutely lush – a forest! Mountains! A canyon! Inverness! OK, that one's a lie. And despite the brevity of the main game, you've also Heart Attack mode to tackle (see box) and a range of other challenges (set by the likes of the Flagman), success in which unlocks, well, more challenges. And cars too.

On the down side, the frame rate can go a bit juddery, and you'll find

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Utterly, absolutely sublime. Makes you grin like the most Cheshire of cats. – Shallow. But who cares?	+ Colourful and rammed with detail. Bee-yoo-tiful. – Frame rate can be a bit rebellious on occasion.	+ Some of us have the soundtrack on our iPods. That good. – Nothing wrong *at all*.

LIFESPAN
Could be short-lived, but you'll still come back for a blast every so often, even when you're months down the line.
MINUTES — YEARS

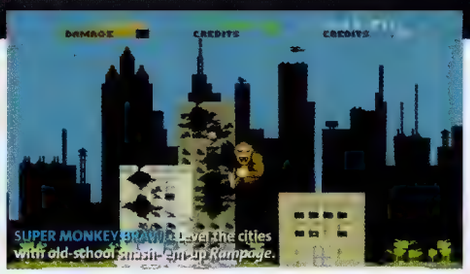
IT'S BETTER THAN...
NFSU: RIVALS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
BURNOUT LEGENDS

Coast 2 Coast could be prescribed as a cure for depression. The most fun you'll have had in ages, and only denied a 90 because it's a bit simple. Still, on PSP it's second only to *Burnout*.

88

BIG GAME HUNTER: There's a great selection of classics, like the super-tough *Spy Hunter*.


SUPER MONKEY BRAWL: Level the cities with old-school smash-'em-up *Rampage*.

PAPERBOY: It hasn't aged well, but it's still one of the most addictive games around.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Digital Escape
Publisher: Midway
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 47KB

GAMEFAX
Beat 'em-up
Old-Skool
Network Play
Hard

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES EXTENDED PLAY

Hooray! A collection of retro titles worthy of a re-release on PSP. They're not exactly *treasures* though...

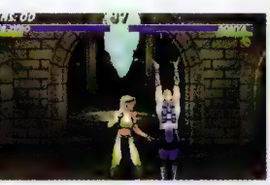
Back in issue 67 we kicked the face off *Midway Arcade Treasures 3*. It was a pile of old toss and it deserved the score of 12% that we stamped on it. After such a debacle, we'd thought we seen the last of Midway's *Treasure* series, but like a bad smell it's lingering around for another chance to get up our noses. This time it's on PSP and, fortunately, it's not rubbish. Phew.

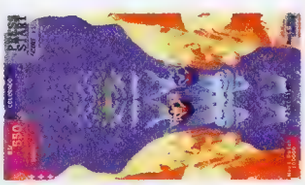
MAT: EP comes with a catalogue of quality retro titles like *Mortal Kombats 1-3*, *Paperboy* and *Toobin'* – a little known racer where you paddle down the rapids in a rubber ring. It also comes with a host of classics that are recognisable even if you're too young to have played them first time round, like *Rampage*, *Spy Hunter* and *Gauntlet* – all recreated to a tee.

And of course there's a set of God-awful filler to bolster the package. *Xybots* anyone? Thought not.

Crucially, *MAT: EP* is fairly enjoyable, thanks largely to the amount of games on offer. As we've seen before, it's easy to cock-up old games by glossing them with needless graphical 'enhancements'. Thankfully, the visuals remain basic and so does the gameplay, meaning it's a must for retro fans. With the distinct lack of unique titles available, *MAT: EP* fits straight into the PSP line-up without looking at all out of place. Best retro package yet. Honestly. Who'da thunk it? **Nathan Irvine**

■ MAT: EP *is in shops right now*





PSM² VERDICT

They've not exactly matured like a fine cheese or wine, but this selection is worth a look. Unfortunately, they're not worth the thirty-five notes that they're priced at. Tsk.

68

LAY-UP AND OVER: Breaking through the defence and putting one in off the board is simple.

KOLOOMN MAKRAZY: None of it makes sense to look at, though it's simple in practice.

LITTER BLOCKS: You'll be seeing spinning blocks for days, literally.

PSM² BRONZE AWARD

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Cyber Front
Publisher: 505 Game Street
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 448kb

GAMEFAX
Old Skool
Hard
Puzzle
Addictive

KOLOOMN

A 1786 statute means the industry is obliged to make one game a year that *isn't* dark, urban or gritty. This is it.

There are a lot of things you need to ignore here. That name, for starters – calling your game 'column' isn't clever, no matter how hard you misspell it. You also need to ignore the way the actual play area is less than a third of that lovely wide screen. Ignore the terrible, scary Manga characters staring from at the sides of each match with their huge toothless mouths and wide, sightless eyes. And you must especially ignore their almost-successfully translated, yet terrible and pointless, bios.

And you need to ignore them because the actual game is horribly addictive. It's described as being like *Tetris* upside down – as if that's exciting to anyone but copyright lawyers, especially on a machine that can easily *be* turned upside down, which would presumably just make it *Tetris*. But never mind that: *Koloomn* is really more like *Puzzle Bobble*, in that it follows the age-old idea of joining coloured things together to make them disappear. In this way – and with various power-ups that get rid of loads at once, or hobble your opponent – you prevent the screen filling up. Why? That's game over.

Of course, blocks appear faster and faster, making a 'game over' more likely. We could go into how you twiddle the squares in blocks of four, and what constitutes a 'chain,' but it's irrelevant here. More importantly, it's easy to grasp, maddening to fail and almost impossible to turn off without 'one more go.' It's hardly pushing PSP, but it'll push your mind upside down. **Steve Williams**

■ Koloomn *is out now*

PSM² VERDICT

Not quite the equal of *Lumines* (except perhaps in the stupid name stakes), *Koloomn* is nevertheless addictive enough to grasp hours (or weeks) of your time.

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"KEEP THE PEACE"

SERENITY

Move over, George Lucas. Joss Whedon re-invents the sci-fi adventure...

In 2002, Joss Whedon, the man behind Buffy The Vampire Slayer and Angel, produced Firefly, a blend of Western action and sci-fi, in which heroes wore six-shooters and flew spaceships. We were introduced to Mal Reynolds, captain of the rickety transport ship Serenity, and his motley crew. This bunch would take any job – legal or otherwise – to make a living. And it was a superb TV show. Sadly, the US public didn't agree, and the network cancelled Firefly after 13 episodes due to low ratings. But Whedon refused to let go – and so now we have full-size movie Serenity.

Taking a pinch of the adventurous spirit that made the original Star Wars great, Serenity keeps your interest with top-notch space action, but never forgets to deliver compelling characters. The cast, having honed their acting on the TV show's limited run, know their roles inside and out and you get the feeling this is more a family than a group of thesps. And Whedon proves he's a skilled director, blending comedy with explosions and tragedy with anger. Everything that worked about the TV show is back in force here, and though the running time means not everyone gets the attention they deserve, the film doesn't suffer.

"EVERYTHING THAT WORKS ABOUT THE TELEVISION SHOW IS BACK IN FORCE IN SERENITY"

UNHOLY ALLIANCE

The big-screen update sees our crew finally unravelling the big secret lurking in the depths of the seemingly benevolent Alliance that runs the galaxy. It's linked to the scavenging, horrific Reavers, a gang of space-zombies who devour their captives alive and bring a gruesome edge to the plot. And Whedon never backs away from the idea that these adventures are dangerous – his heroes die just as easily as his villains, while the main bad guy never devolves into a moustache-twirling stock character. Serenity has the edge over most other recent sci-fi epics: heart, soul and some amazing battle scenes to boot. It's the whole package and deserves to be huge on DVD. So make sure it gets justice and go out and buy it, eh? You know it makes sense.

STARRING
- Nathan Fillion
- Summer Glau
- Gina Torres
- Adam Baldwin
- Jewel Staite
- Alan Tudyk
- Morena Baccarin

DIRECTOR
- Joss Whedon

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

PSM² VERDICT

MOVIE	GOOD+BAD	DVD
+ Good humour peppers a great script. The whole thing is stellar. – Nothing.	+ Some excellent special effects. – Some characters get short-changed.	+ Solid director's commentary – But there's little cast input here.

EXTRAS

Whedon is his usually avuncular self on the commentary, but the cast interact so well that it's a shame they're not on it with him. They're limited to a couple of featurettes and a funny gag reel.

IT'S BETTER THAN...
REVENGE OF THE SITH

IT'S WORSE THAN...
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Space opera as it should be. Better than Buffy, better than Angel, better than pretty much any sci-fi in the last ten years. This is required viewing.

91

"RUN, RABBIT! RUN, RABBIT! RUN, RUN, RUN!"

WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERERABBIT

The plasticine pals make their big screen debut...

STARRING
- Peter Sallis
- Ralph Fiennes
- Helena Bonham Carter
- Peter Kay
- John Thompson
- Liz Smith
- Nicholas Smith
- Mark Gatiss

DIRECTOR
- Nick Park
- Steve Box

CERTIFICATE
- PG

PRICE
- £22.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

Wallace and Gromit are one of the few British institutions of which we can all still be proud, and they're continuing to fly the flag for us in their jump to cinemas. As funny as anything released by the Pixar team, The Curse Of The Wererabbit finds our plasticine duo at work as humane pest control outfit Anti-Pesto. The local village's fair is coming up, with its annual highlight, the vegetable competition (you can tell this is British right off). But there's something nasty lurking in the gardens. A giant beast is ravaging the veg – and it's up to inventor Wallace and smart-but-silent pooch pal Gromit to solve the mystery.

CARTOON CAPERS

Wererabbit channels everything that works about the Wallace And Gromit shorts that precede it. The distinct tang of British comedy hasn't been affected by Nick Park's association with big US studio DreamWorks and the crazed contraptions that Wallace builds are all present and correct. Plus, the quirky character count continues, with the likes of Helena Bonham Carter's dotty aristocrat and Ralph Fiennes' snooty hunter. The plot builds to the point where Park and co are able to unleash one of their trademark chase scenes, pitching up the action and the gags to new heights. It might be a stop-motion 'toon, but Wallace and Gromit are never just kids' stuff.

PSM2 VERDICT

MOVIE	GOOD+BAD	DVD
+ Imaginative, hilarious gadgets. – Some repeated ideas take the edge off it.	+ Terrible puns ahoy! We like puns. – A bit twee in places. But not too often.	+ Loaded down with goodies. – Maybe too long a Making Of.

EXTRAS

Can there be too much of a good thing? W&G is certainly good value, loaded with extras. But do we all need to know everything about the process? One for animation fans only.

IT'S BETTER THAN...
THE CORPSE BRIDE

IT'S WORSE THAN...
THE WRONG TROUSERS

Britain's best are triumphant in their migration to the big screen. One of those mythical films for both kids and adults to enjoy.

85

INTO THE BLUE

STARRING
- Paul Walker
- Jessica Alba

DIRECTOR
- John Stockwell

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- February 20th

If you're a bloke, there are two very good reasons to watch Into The Blue. And, naturally, both of these good reasons belong to Jessica Alba. And for the ladies, there's also Paul Walker strutting about with his top off a lot. Yes, Into The Blue is a dumb-as-chips action drama that sees Walker and Alba's thrill-seeking treasure hunters discover – along with two buddies – a crashed plane full of illegal cargo. Soon their friendship is being torn apart by greed and they're under threat from some distinctly nasty crooks. Exciting, original stuff there, we're sure you'll agree. No, the action is certainly nothing new in the slightest, so this is really just one to get if you like either of the leads. And we do. Jessica Alba in a bikini for a whole film? Oh, go on, then. Just be careful you don't go blind.

43

KISS KISS BANG BANG

STARRING
- Robert Downey Jr
- Val Kilmer

DIRECTOR
- Shane Black

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £17.99

RELEASE
- March 13th

Shane Black is the legendary screenwriter who penned, among others, the original Lethal Weapon and The Last Boy Scout, and then abruptly vanished off the Hollywood radar. He's back with a cracking directorial debut starring Robert Downey Jr as a cunning-yet-laid-back thief from New York who accidentally stumbles into an audition for a Hollywood noir. Relocated to LA, he ends up paired with former cop-turned movie advisor Gay Perry (Kilmer) and the two of them must solve a very real mystery. Tweaking the conventions of the private eye movie, Kiss Kiss keeps you entertained for every twist and turn. It's funny, dangerous, wild and explosive and the two leads have rarely been better, Superior moviemaking.

86

Films from another space and time

ANIMANIA

MADLAX: V6

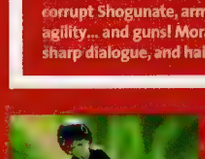
Only those with The Gift are able to read the Holy Words of Saruon. They are the pathway to the door of truth – the only means by which the reality can be revealed. But, without the gift the Holy Words can cause grave danger and teeter the delicate balance of creation and circumstance. Which means... girls with guns are going to go flying about shooting people in their pants! Hooray!

76

SAMURAI GUN 4

Samurai Gun is a blood-drenched tour of the bakumatsu period, a turbulent time that ultimately brought an end to Japan's feudal system. A special breed of samurai stands against the corrupt Shogunate, armed with superior strength, speed, agility... and guns! Morally ambiguous 'heroes', razor-sharp dialogue, and hair-trigger violence.

81



GATCHAMAN VOLUME 1

Gatchaman is the seminal 1970s anime series from Tatsunoko Productions which was recut for broadcast in the US as Battle of the Planets and later G-Force. Gatchaman introduced fans around the world to the wonders of Japanese animation. The cool characters, over-the-top storylines, and complex team dynamic set it apart from other similar shows. Groundbreaking stuff.

88

ALSO RELEASED

RESCUE ME: SEASON ONE

Out Now Cert 15 Price £39.99

A pitch-black comedy drama about the lives of firefighters in New York after 9/11. It shoves the boundaries of taste, but it's also brutal and brilliant.

80

LORD OF WAR

Out Now Cert 15 Price £19.99

Nic Cage plays a Ukrainian weapons dealer caught between the woman he loves and the government agent trying to shut him down. It never quite gels.

67

THE LEGEND OF ZORRO

Out Now Cert PG Price £12.99

A strictly by-the-numbers sequel to 1998's impressive Mask Of Zorro. Patronising and pointless, this is a pale shadow of the first film. Tragic.

35

THE BROTHERS GRIMM

Released March 13th Cert 12 Price £19.99

Terry Gilliam returns with a misfire. Heath Ledger and Matt Damon are the Grimm brothers hoaxing gullible villagers with cheap scares. Disappointing.

50

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THE SCIENCE

We love them so much they're now everywhere. And it's easy to get sick of them, as they're everywhere. And what's PS3 but a follow-up to PS2? Welcome to the world of sequels...

It's not hard to understand the appeal of sequels. If you like chocolate ice cream, then surely two scoops are better than one, especially with a handful of cherries on top? But, of course, there's a reason why there's the 'difficult second album' cliché, and Police Academy 7: Mission to Moscow didn't smash box office profits. Even if you like chocolate ice cream, eight scoops may make you puke. Or what if your serving comes with a chilli pepper on top?

Enough with the chocolatey metaphors. Whether or not sequels are good or bad in concept, there are definitely better sequels or worse sequels, as we've recounted for you over the next six pages. We seem to spend most of our time playing them, anticipating them, being let down by them and loving them. The cost of making videogames is already huge – with the average development budget of a PS3 game weighing in at £3.2 trentifillion, and 37 artists needed to animate a cloud – so sequels seem to be the way forward for now, allowing developers to build on an established, recognisable brand, while 'expanding' gameplay ideas without the hassle of having to invent entirely new (read: risky) ones.

Both *GTA: San Andreas* and *Resident Evil 4* are thoroughbred examples of this. It's unlikely Rockstar could've created an entire state of free-roaming, vehicle-packed gaming if it wasn't for the support and experience provided by *GTAs III* and *Vice City*. And it's just as unlikely that Capcom would've sunk so much time, money and effort into *Resident Evil 4*, if it didn't represent the first proper generational update of the series that coined 'survival horror'. *Resi 4*'s example is more interesting than that, though – it went through four iterations before settling on the game you've (hopefully) played and (most likely) loved. Does that make it *Resident Evil 7*, then? Does it have three long-sacrificed brothers in the form of sequels that we were spared?

A franchise like *Hitman*, however, is one that didn't start out so rosy. The

OF SEQUELS

SOME SEQUELS ARE NOTHING BUT THEIR EXISTING GUISES DRESSED IN A HAT; CHICKEN MEAT MADE FAT"

original was a bumbled implementation of a fantastic idea, but it's one that's become more refined as it goes on, with each subsequent game turning its potential into lumps of goodness. Some game series just do their own thing, sometimes leaving a bitter taste on the thumbs of the formerly-faithful: *Burnout 3*'s significant departure from *Burnout 2*, with the former putting more emphasis on OTT car combat over the latter's *OutRun*-style slides, made some fans to end their relationship with the series, and not the kind where they still remain friends. But a great game it was, nonetheless, and still saw success. We don't know what point we're trying to make there – maybe that a few chocolate ice-cream fans would pull their own throats out at the thought of downing some drinking chocolate. Are games like *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence* and *Devil May Cry 3: Special Edition* sequels too? They're spin-offs, for sure, stopgaps to keep the foamy-mouthed occupied and faithful until the PS3 versions come along.

Certainly, some of the sequels coming your way will be nothing but their existing guises, except dressed in a new hat; repackaging that's nothing but cheap chicken meat made fat with injections of water. But, at the moment, sequels are hugely important and, vitally, still plenty of fun. At least most of the time, anyway. Will things be the same way in ten years time? Will the games industry have a heart attack, its veins so clogged with the fat and stress involved in making games bigger, noisier and prettier?

Rest assured, we'll be back in 2016 with Sequel Feature II: The Doubling, which will be 90 pages long, with five times as many fonts and feature hexagonal screenshots. We'll probably be bored of chocolate ice-cream by then, though.

THE 10 BEST SEQUELS...

The kind of games where you wear your best shoes and say grace when you sit down to play. There are plenty more that could be added to this list, of course; if you've got your own Top 10, send it in to the usual address.

GTA: *San Andreas* – the best sequel ever. It's official.

ONE
GTA SAN ANDREAS

GTA III was a game made for sequels, a core idea upon which umpteen great features could be bolted, while fattening the landmass in every direction. *Vice City* opted for a new kind of cool instead of any major expansion – although the inclusion of bikes and 'copters was a beautiful touch – but *San Andreas* is where *GTA* really began to beef itself up, fleshing out some sim-like details while introducing more vehicles than you could shake a James Bond at. We're still receiving wish-lists for sequels to this, some 15 months after its release.

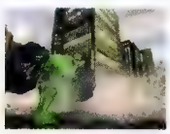
TWO
METAL GEAR SOLID 3

Plenty of games offer stealth, but none of them as well as *MGS3*. As convoluted as the controls and plot can feel, there's never any let-up in the detail and possibilities of the espionage on offer, not to mention a storyline that sees more double-crosses than a cock-eyed priest. Kojima's masterwork is also a goldmine of knowing references for fans, something that few sequels pull off.

THREE
BURNOUT: REVENGE

Burnout 3 saw the series become a hyperactive destruction derby. Turning the destruction up to a healthy multiple of 11, *Burnout Revenge* made itself less frustrating by allowing players to bash their way through traffic, while telling the fast bits to go even faster.

INSTANT CARMA: It didn't please all *Burnout* fans, but *Revenge* is amazing.



FOUR
INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

The original *Hulk* was a limited – and hence dull, since Hulk no like limits – combat game whose sequel turned to *GTA*-style open-plan areas to give the green giant the room he needed to smash stuff big nice. With a move list more at home in a one-on-one beat-'em-up and some gloriously overblown violence that could push a surround system to its limits, it was ultimately tainted by some frustrating mission goals and boss tussles.

SIX
RESIDENT EVIL 4

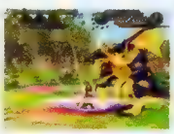
It took four years to develop, and went through four different iterations in the course of its creation – the kind of schedule and cost that would make most publishers choke on their own shock. But Capcom pulled it off and slam-dunked it into gaming's hall of fame. A new third-person perspective and a seemingly endless stream of brilliant combat set-pieces made *Resi 4* one of few sequels to make some truly epic progress.

MONSTER MAGNET: Look at that! *Resi 4* is full of spectacular monsters.

EYE CANDY WOAH: Simply put, this game's a work of art. Get it. Now.

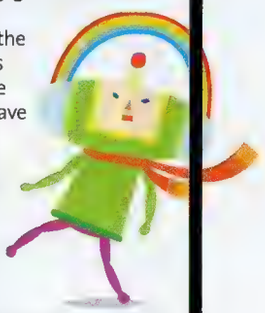
SEVEN
DARK CHRONICLE

Dark Cloud was a PS2 launch title, a washed-out RPG that couldn't bring its gaggle of neat ideas to fruition. Its follow-up, *Dark Chronicle*, gave it the kiss of life, offering an adventure that was part resource-management, part dungeon-crawler and all, er, consuming. Build villages to save the future, evolve your weapons along crazy upgrade trees, and get lost in one of the longest and wildest RPGs around.



EIGHT
WE LOVE KATAMARI

Every time you play a *Katamari* game, God *saves* a kitten. Namco's brilliantly barmy ball-rolling sequel *We Love Katamari* topped the original in one very special way: it actually got released in the UK. In typically imaginative fashion, the sequel's storyline was centred on fans of the original game, that have turned up to request help from *Katamari*'s star, the Prince of All Cosmos. The sort of game that makes you happier than Mr Happy himself.



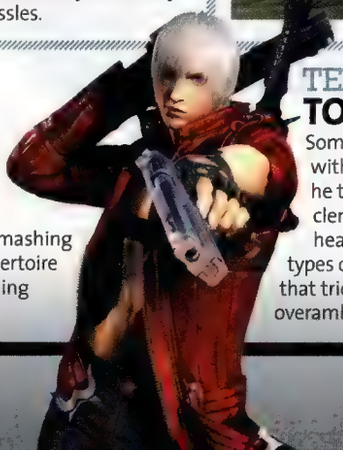
BREATH-TAKING *Colossus* is an awe-inspiring sequel. Of sorts, anyway.

NINE
SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

Not a direct sequel to *Ico*, more an alternate adventure that takes place in the same world. But, hey, why split hairs when *Shadow Of The Colossus* offers a series of mind-blowing boss battles against high-rise behemoths. This sequence of successive King Kongs make the player feel no bigger than a pesky mosquito. The frame rate may have the shivers, but it's a game with more atmosphere than Jupiter and the capacity to make lemon-faced cynics clap like a happy infant. One of the most awe-inspiring games of recent times.

FIVE
DEVIL MAY CRY 3

Capcom chose to take us for a stroll down memory lane, basing this third *DMC* on Dante's youth. Well, we say a stroll, but it's more like a breakdancing competition staged in a minefield, with the funkiest corner of hell as backdrop. After the relative flatness of *DMC2*, this slick return to form resulted in an atom-smashing action game, upping every aspect of Dante's psycho-acrobat repertoire to produce a precise, but demanding, tour de force of gut-punching guns 'n' swords violence. Bravo.



TEN
TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

Somewhere within the halls of Codemasters' HQ stalks a monster, a madman with a brain the size of a basketball. No-one stops to talk to him, because all he talks about is cars. Cars, cars, cars. "*Gran Turismo 4*?!?" he hisses through clenched teeth. "It's just a *small handful* of cars!" he laughs, throwing his head back while thinking continuously about new ways to get even *more* types of car into the next *TOCA* game. He's responsible for *TOCA 3*, a racing sim that tries to be all racing sims ever, and a game that's far from the overambitious mess it could've been. Far from it.

WHY DID THEY SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY?

... AND THE FIVE WORST

Five recent sequels that could, and should, have been far, far better.

ONE
ALTERED BEAST

A sequel without a subtitle, *Altered Beast* is the follow-up to the Mega Drive action game of the same name. The original was crud, made memorable only because it was free with Sega's old console. This awful PS2 update had no such luck – maybe Sega should try giving it away for free again?

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 2/5

A 'classic' Sega property, it may be exhumed again...

TWO
DEATH BY DEGREES

Not so much a sequel as a spin-off, *Tekken*'s sassy spy psycho decides to go it alone, in this 3D beat 'em up with guns in. We're all for equal opportunities and independent wimmin and that, but some ladies just can't hack it solo. See *Stolen* and *Rogue Ops* for more details.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 1/5

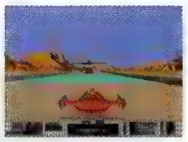
Death By 42%, more like.

THREE
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 3

Milking a back catalogue of retro throwbacks is common these days, as pensionable publishers dig behind their collective sofas to repackage games that people still coo over, even though they've not played them for 10 years. This is the worst one ever.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 2/5

Hopefully, the barrel's been scraped to destruction. But probably not. Will you all please stop buying these things?



FOUR
GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS

Whether or not you think retro gaming is a pile of blinkered nonsense, we've still got room on the PS2 for a riotous multi-player beat/shoot-'em-up. God knows, *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy* failed to plug that gap. As did the recent, and lacking, *Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows*. Bum.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 4/5

There's still life in the license, but it needs better parenting. And an overhaul from the top down.

FIVE
ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

A little unfair, this, since it's hardly an awful game. But it didn't just fail to build on the strengths of *Spider-Man 2*, but actually dampened some of them. There's still plenty of potential tucked away in the licence, of course.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 4/5

He'll continue doing whatever *GTA* can, probably.

GAMES THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE SEQUELS

CLOSE THE DOOR ON YOUR WAY OUT

Five games from the past year or so that should get the snip, and never be allowed sequels.

ONE
CRIME LIFE: GANG WARS

Konami's darkest hour for quite some time, *Crime Life* is virtual thuggery at its worst: clumsy, ill-thought out and inexcusably exploitative, spending a few hours with this would make some damn fine community service for when all those bus shelters are repainted.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 2/5

We'd love to say 1/5, but this is *urban*, y'know? Sigh.

TWO
7 SINS

Low budget, seduce-'em-up sex nonsense that's as satisfying as pushing your finger into a dead dog. Should be buried in a Y-shaped coffin, beneath a mountain of used condoms, scat videos and Ron Jeremies.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 2/5

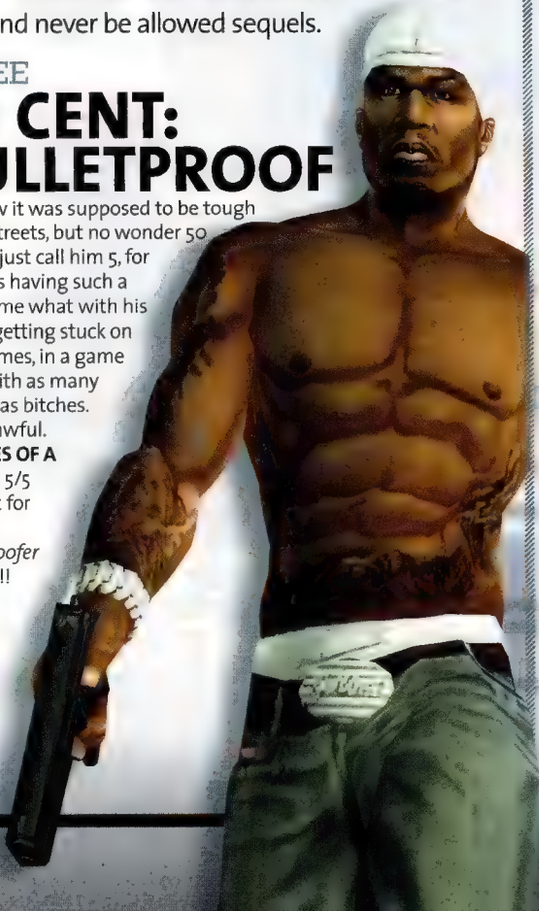
Only PS3 could make these women look any freakier.

THREE
50 CENT: BULLETPROOF

We knew it was supposed to be tough on the streets, but no wonder 50 (can we just call him 5, for short?) is having such a rough time what with his friends getting stuck on door frames, in a game world with as many glitches as bitches. Utterly awful.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 5/5

Look out for *50 Cent: Bulletproofer* next fall!!!



FOUR
CRAZY FROG RACER

Crazy Frog achieved notoriety almost overnight; the game came close to doing the same, mostly because it felt like it was in development for the same period of time. We'll miss his tiny failed-sex-change-operation willy, though.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 1/5

He's gone now. If we're quiet, he won't come back. We hope.

FIVE
NINJABREAD MAN

Top marks for the name, of course – it's the kind of moniker that perks your interest. But then a brief playtest of its prehistoric platforming action and sadistic difficulty convinces you that it needed another year or two in the oven.

CHANCES OF A SEQUEL: 1/5

Ninjabread Woman? Would she have cherry bakewell breasts?

BETTER LIGHTING EFFECTS

This is often the only payoff for an aging game engine that's undergone a 'complete overhaul'. You'll often hear plenty of technoblurb thrown around at this point, as the light from the game's moon or sun finally reaches ground level, throwing shadows about and upping the pretty. Indeed, Sony's PS3 R&D department is working overtime to get the console's graphical skills crunched down into impressively cryptic three-word phrases that everyone will soon be using to describe clever visual effects. See also: improved textures.

THE ANATOMY OF A SEQUEL CHARACTER

SCARS

When videogame characters age, they don't just start to smell like old telephone directories or keep forgetting who's the Prime Minister. Nope, they pick up hideous facial wounds, their voices drop an octave or two and they keep having moody flashbacks rendered in increasingly expensive CGI cut-scenes, as the consequences of past decisions come back to bite them on the ass. Well, that, or we get to live out their youths – *Devil May Cry 3* sees Dante having the videogame equivalent of his prom.

PHYSICS

Everyone loves physics, apart from angry biologists and people who've fallen out of windows. They turn bits of the environment into props that can be used as shields, weapons or an endless source of slapstick DIY amusement. Who cares about plot inconsistencies when we can watch a dead soldier slide down a set of stairs while doing the splits? Well some do, but HEE HEE THOSE TWO CORPSES LOOK LIKE THEY'RE SHAGGING!

MORE SEX

If your leading lady doesn't quite manage to pull a profitable number of punters, you could always go the way of the barmaid and drop that cleavage another inch or two. *Bloodrayne 2* took this to the extreme, with the titular lead character 'doing' a nude photoshoot for Playboy, but only so far as getting her titulars out. In fact, 2005 was the year for embarrassing soft-porn promotion – both *Darkwatch* and *Fahrenheit* got in the act, with their leading ladies peeling their make-believe clothes off so that people could have make-believe sex with them in make-believe land. And people say gamers have no lives. Tsk.

SKILLS

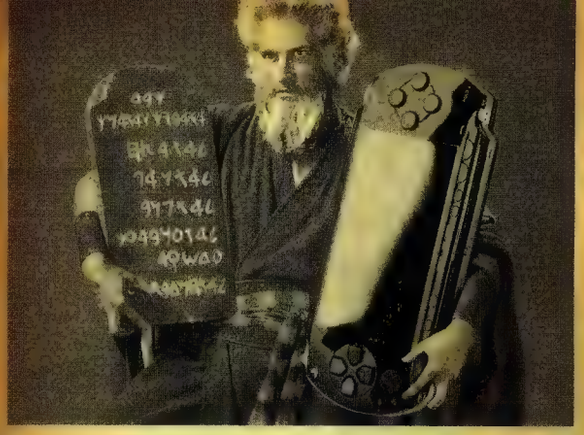
The whole of the *Tony Hawk* videogame empire seems to revolve around the idea of adding three or four new skateboard tricks with each subsequent game, with the latest – *American Wasteland* – featuring a move list as dizzying as a martian takeaway menu. One series that seems to have gone the other way, though, is *Ratchet & Clank;* the fourth game in the series pretty much did away with gadget-swapping and any pretence of platforming, instead choosing to focus on guns, offering more firepower than your average branch of Wal-Mart. *Prince Of Persia*, meanwhile, has added about three squillion new combat moves, despite the fact it was the silky *platforming* that made *Sands Of Time* so great. Doh.

MORE VEHICLES

Lara did this a fair amount with her PSone incarnations, while a fundamental part of the *GTA* series is offering players new ways to travel and cause mischief. If you're a driving game, don't forget to increase the size of your garage exponentially with each sequel. Including vehicles worked so well for *Jak 3* that it warranted its own racing combat spin-off in the form of *Jak X*. Still, we wouldn't like to see *Ico* churning up the castle grounds on a quad bike.

MORE CHARACTERS

This is where the maths of sequelology is at its most basic – double the choice, double your fun; the calculations that have kept the *Dynasty Warriors* series going for so long – even if nobody but those who keep a copy of The Art Of War under their pillows are still interested – with *DW5* featuring more characters than any soap. But there are only so many candles you can put on a cake before it collapses. Whatever that means.



THE ELEVEN COMMANDMENTS

The sequel to The Ten Commandments, naturally, and a guide to the rules of creating follow-ups.

I

Man cannot live by new costumes alone.

II

Thou shalt not steal from *GTA* so shamelessly. There are more games out there with plenty of good content to 'inspire' you.

III

Listen to thy fans, but only up to a point. There's a difference between constructive feedback and the random notes of a bunch of lunatics.

IV

Although it may seem a tempting marriage, cars with guns on are the sole preserve of bad '70s sci-fi.

V

Thou shalt not have a crappy subtitle. No, really.

VI

Thou shalt not tack on a crappy hidden token collection quest, and call it 'depth'.

VII

Thou shalt release big-name games at other times of year besides Xmas, thus giving us a few days of rest.

VIII

Thou shalt not mindlessly inject stealth elements, as creeping about on all fours in a rubbish manner is a grave sin indeed.

IX

Thou shalt not covet the world of hip-hop and rap, for they are false gods.

X

Thou shalt avoid using puns in your titles, unless they're truly excellent or fantastically dismal.

XI

To whom it concernst: please, please can you give Tony Hawk and James Bond some time off? They're looking right knackered, the pair of them. Erm, verily.

NEED FOR SEQUEL: MOST WANTED

Five games that we reckon are deserving of the red carpet treatment, in the form of a top sequel. This is where lottery funding should go, really.

ONE
PSYCHONAUTS (ISSUE 65, 90%)

A game that mostly took place in the brains of weirdoes, the only new thing it did for platforming games was make them enjoyable again – no mean feat. But its style was as refreshing as getting punched in the face by a woman made of lemonade. Staggeringly imaginative – more! More!

TWO
SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR (ISSUE 67, 88%)

Bloodthirsty as hell, Ancient Greek action-fantasy game *Spartan* proved that it's not just Japan that's capable of creating epic virtual battlefields. And there are all manner of mythical nasties that we'd happily go twelve rounds with in a follow-up, given the chance.

THREE
GOD OF WAR (ISSUE 62, 92%)

OK, so there's obviously a sequel on its way, but it's worth reminding ourselves just what a sensation it could be. *GoW* was a macho action epic that gushed crisp beauty and sweated pheromones. Just imagine how big its balls could be on PS3. Please don't let *The Urbz* outsell it next time, eh?

FOUR
LEGO STAR WARS (ISSUE 62, 78%)

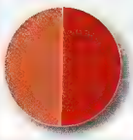
Another one that's definite, but worth celebrating. The first game featured stages pulled from Episodes I-III and had more charisma in one character than in all the recent Star Wars movies, so a game about Episodes IV-VI has to be excellent.

FIVE
FREEDOM FIGHTERS (ISSUE 40, 92%)

Here's one that we would have liked to have been fed into EA's annual update machine, if only to see its solid team-focused combat and engaging shootouts expanded upon. Can't see it happening, though.

GRAPHS AND STUFF

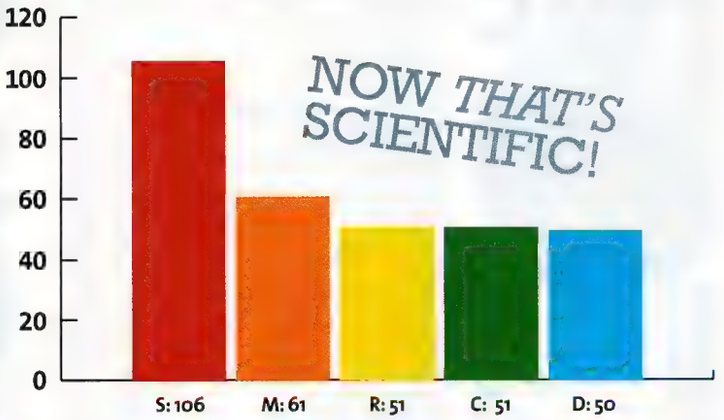
Created using a mixture of maths, acupuncture and kung-fu, here's a brief collection of stats about sequels. Not that there aren't already plenty of numbers in a feature about sequels... All figures down below were taken from the reviews listing of the March 2006 issue of PSM2.



NUMBER OF SEQUELS/SPIN-OFFS/UPDATES ON PS2 (TAKEN FROM MARCH 2006 PSM2 REVIEWS LISTING)
Sequels etc: 50.65% (391 games)
Original games: 49.35% (381 games)

NUMBER OF SEQUELS/SPIN-OFFS/UPDATES ON PSP (TAKEN FROM MARCH 2006 PSM2 REVIEWS LISTING)
Sequels etc: 78.9% (45 games)
Original games: 21.1% (12 games)

WHICH LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET DO MOST GAME NAMES START WITH?



ON AVERAGE, A SEQUEL SCORES 2.64% *LESS* THAN THE ORIGINAL WHEN IT'S REVIEWED.

THE GTA EFFECT

Five follow-ups most 'influenced' by the success of the *GTA* series.

- *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction*
- *The Simpsons: Hit 'n' Run*
- *Spider-Man 2*
- *Need for Speed: Underground*
- *Crash Tag Team Racing*

FIVE WORST SUBTITLES

- *Big Mutha Truckers 2: Truck Me Harder*
- *Call of Duty 2: Big Red One*
- *The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer*
- *The Sims: Bustin' Out*
- *Splashdown 2: Riders Gone Wild*

MOST ANTICIPATED SEQUELS

- *Splinter Cell: Double Agent*
- *Tomb Raider Legend*
- *Hitman: Blood Money*
- *Metal Gear Solid 4*
- PS3 *Killzone*

FIVE BEST ORIGINAL PSP GAMES

- *Lumines*
- *Mercury*
- *Pursuit Force*
- *Gripshift*
- *Infected*

PSM Presents...

The Truth

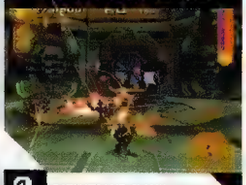
Every game PSM2 has ever reviewed in one fact-packed feature. It's the ultimate source of PS2 knowledge right at your fingertips.

TOP FIVE

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

1. TIMESPLITTERS 2
2. HALF-LIFE
3. BLACK
4. DEUS EX
5. CALL OF DUTY 2

PLATFORMERS



1. RATCHET AND CLANK 3
2. JAK 2: RENEGADE
3. PSYCHONAUTS
4. SLY 3
5. BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

DRIVING

1. BURNOUT REVENGE
2. GRAN TURISMO 4
3. COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04
4. MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION
5. TOCA RACER DRIVER 3

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
7 BLADES	11	72%	
7 SINS	63	58%	
13 (XIII)	42	87%	
24 – THE GAME	72	80%	
50 CENT: BULLETPROOF	70	48%	
187: RIDE OR DIE	66	72%	
2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	22	71%	
ACE COMBAT 4: SHATTERED SKIES	17	80%	
ACE COMBAT 5	57	79%	
ACTIVISION ANTHOLOGY	36	40%	
AGE OF EMPIRES 2	15	76%	
AGGRESSIVE INLINE	24	83%	
AIRBLADE	16	77%	
ALIAS	47	79%	
ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER	15	65%	
ALIEN HOMINID	61	74%	
ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004	35	67%	
ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE	15	66%	
ALTERED BEAST	61	42%	
ANIMANIACS: THE GREAT EDGAR HUNT	64	62%	
APE ESCAPE 2	30	80%	
AQUA AQUA	04	71%	
ARCTIC THUNDER	16	58%	
ARC: TWILIGHT OF SPIRITS	46	68%	
AREA 51	62	79%	
ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE	11	47%	
ARMY MEN RTS	24	56%	
ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2	09	40%	
ASTRO BOY	61	69%	
ATHENS 2004	51	51%	
A-TRAIN 6	49	60%	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	40	73%	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 3	68	74%	
ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2	33	68%	
ASTERIX AND OBELIX XXL	46	60%	
AUTO MODELLISTA	28	80%	
BAD BOYS 2	48	51%	
BACKYARD WRESTLING	42	45%	
BACKYARD WRESTLING 2	56	46%	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE	17	70%	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 2	04	82%	
BARBARIAN	44	66%	
THE BARD'S TALE	60	74%	
BASS STRIKE	18	64%	
BATMAN BEGINS	65	41%	
BATMAN VS. THE ARMY OF TSU	44	43%	
BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA	31	78%	
BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT	68	82%	
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	44	59%	
BEAT DOWN: FISTS OF VENGEANCE	67	54%	
BEN HUR: BLOOD OF BRAVES	34	42%	
BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL	42	82%	
BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS 2: TRUCK ME HARDER	65	52%	
BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET	64	60	
BLACK	72	89%	
BLACK HAWK DOWN	64	59%	
BLOOD OMEN 2	22	79%	
BLOODRAYNE	36	67%	
BLOODRAYNE 2	63	39%	
BLOODY ROAR 3	11	79%	
BLOOD WILL TELL	57	60%	
BLOWOUT	58	49%	
BMX XXX	30	58%	
BOMBERMAN HARDBALL	65	60%	
BOMBERMAN KART	41	51%	
BOUNCER, THE	11	66%	
BOXING CHAMPIONS	41	40%	
BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER	41	70%	
BRITNEY'S DANCE BEAT	24	58%	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: THE ROAD TO HILL 30	60	82%	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: EARNED IN BLOOD	68	84%	
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS	41	74%	
BURNOUT	15	88%	
BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT	28	**91%**	
Beautiful, emotional racing that you have to play to fully appreciate.			
BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	54	**93%**	
Smooth, fast and online too. You'd be a fool not to buy it.			
BURNOUT REVENGE	67	**93%**	
As astonishing as ever, and as pure a videogame as you'll ever see.			
BUZZ! THE MUSIC QUIZ	68	84%	
CABELA'S DANGEROUS HUNTS	53	57%	
CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR	56	87%	
CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE	70	86%	
CAPCOM FIGHTING JAM	58	53%	
CAPCOM VS SNK 2: MARK OF THE MILLENNIUM 2001	17	83%	
CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION	68	53%	
CART FURY	12	65%	
CASPER: SPIRIT DIMENSIONS	22	48%	
CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS	72	64%	
CASTLEWEEN	30	45%	
CATWOMAN	52	30%	
CEL DAMAGE OVERDRIVE	36	50%	

NEW ENTRY
MGS SUBSISTENCE

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 5	63	62%	
CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST	47	82%	
CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS	60	69%	
CHAOS LEGION	39	86%	
CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	66	31%	
CHOROQ	64	25%	
CHOPLIFTER: CRISIS` SHIELD	35	48%	
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	69	67%	
CIRCUS MAXIMUS: CHARIOT WARS	25	55%	
CLOCK TOWER 3	37	59%	
CLUB FOOTBALL	42	61%	
CLUB FOOTBALL 2	55	67%	
CODENAME KIDS NEXT DOOR: OP VIDEOGAME	71	33%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY '04	40	**92%**	
A defining moment for rally games. If you like rallying, get it.			
COLD FEAR	60	83%	
COLD WINTER	62	80%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	54	88%	
COLOSSEUM: ROAD TO FREEDOM	65	51%	
COMBAT ELITE: WW2 PARATROOPERS	52	77%	
COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE	24	79%	
CONFLICT: DESERT STORM	27	78%	
CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2	39	88%	
CONFLICT: VIETNAM	54	76%	
CONFLICT: GLOBAL STORM	67	78%	
CONFLICT ZONE	22	79%	
CONSPIRACY: WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION	65	23%	
CONSTANTINE	60	60%	
CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER	32	52%	
CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX	17	66%	
CRASH 'N BURN	57	46%	
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING	70	74%	
CRASH TWINSANITY	55	49%	
CRAZY FROG RACER	71	37%	
CRAZY TAXI	10	80%	
CRICKET 2005	64	79%	
CRIME LIFE	70	30%	
CRIMSON SEA 2	53	70%	
CRISIS ZONE	53	59%	
CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON	44	35%	
CY GIRLS	50	74%	
DAKAR 2	34	50%	
DANCE UK	42	67%	
DANCING STAGE FUSION	58	67%	
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX	36	85%	
DARK ANGEL	34	45%	
DARK CHRONICLE	37	**90%**	
Debatably better than *Final Fantasy X*...			
DARK CLOUD	11	81%	
DARK SUMMIT	21	56%	
DARKWATCH	67	75%	
DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2	14	76%	
DEAD OR ALIVE 2	05	83%	
DEAD TO RIGHTS	38	70%	
DEAD TO RIGHTS 2	65	41%	
DEATH BY DEGREES	60	42%	
DEFENDER	31	76%	

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY	54	86%	
DEF JAM VENDETTA	36	75%	
DESTROY ALL HUMANS	64	83%	
DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS	45	42%	
DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY	22	88%	
DEVIL KINGS	69	64%	
DEVIL MAY CRY	15	**90%**	
Blindingly gorgeous and cracking to play. A brilliant advert for PS2.			
DEVIL MAY CRY 2	33	72%	
DEVIL MAY CRY 3	60	89%	
DIE HARD VENDETTA	38	54%	
DINO STALKER	26	58%	
DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS	49	86%	
DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE	40	78%	
DJ: DECKS & FX	53	74%	
DONALD DUCK PK	30	64%	
DOWNFORCE	23	64%	
DOT HACK INFECTION: PART ONE	47	58%	
DOWNHILL DOMINATION	46	80%	
DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI	30	60%	
DRAGON BALL Z: TENKAICHI	68	74%	
DRAKENGARD	50	75%	
DRAGON QUEST VIII	71	**90%**	
The RPG series finally makes its way to PS2, and it's wonderful.			
DRAGON RAGE	23	43%	
DRAKAN: THE ANCIENTS' GATES	20	75%	
DRIV3R	50	**90%**	
Superb in Free Ride, less so in Story Mode, but balls-out fun			
DRIVEN	17	46%	
DRIVEN TO DESTRUCTION	55	65%	
DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S	01	57%	
DR MUTO	33	59%	
DROME RACERS	31	50%	
DYNASTY TACTICS 2	44	69%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 3: XTREME LEGENDS	34	69%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4	37	80%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS	46	70%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 5	63	53%	
ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE	18	52%	
EGGO MANIA	27	40%	
EJAY CLUBWORLD	26	84%	
ENDGAME	25	49%	
ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	49	62%	
ENTER THE MATRIX	37	81%	
ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING	62	77%	
EOE: EVE OF EXTINCTION	22	71%	
EPHEMERAL FANTASIA	12	80%	
ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND	12	82%	
ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD	04	63%	
ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS	20	55%	
ESPN NBA 2NIGHT 2002	24	72%	
ESPN NFL 2K5	59	83%	
ESPN NHL 2K5	59	71%	
ESPN NHL HOCKEY	44	78%	
ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING	15	62%	
ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2	20	69%	
EVERBLUE 2	34	56%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79% | SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89% | GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES	41	70%	
EVERYBODY'S GOLF	67	87%	
EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK	37	68%	
EVIL DEAD REGENERATION	70	47%	
EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING	33	54%	
EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING	33	43%	
EXTERMINATION	09	78%	
EYE TOY: ANTIGRAV	63	66%	
EYETOY: PLAY 2	56	75%	
EYETOY: PLAY 3	69	70%	
F1 2005	64	83%	
F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP	07	66%	
FAHRENHEIT	66	87%	
FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL	48	46%	
FANTASTIC 4	65	65%	
FANTAVISION	01	85%	
FATAL FRAME 3: THE TORMENTED	71	79%	
FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, THE	30	70%	
FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE	27	67%	
FIFA 2005	54	79%	
FIFA 06	67	71%	
FIFA STREET	60	63%	
FIGHT CLUB	59	19%	
FIGHT NIGHT 2004	48	88%	
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2	61	89%	
FINAL FANTASY X	23	**91%**	
The most life-swallowing RPG of them all.			
FINAL FANTASY 10-2	44	83%	
FINAL FANTASY XI (IMPORT)	49	85%	
FINDING NEMO	41	71%	
FIREBLADE	24	68%	
FIREFIGHTER FD18	49	76%	
FLAT OUT	56	77%	
FLIPNIC	45	76%	
FLOW: URBAN DANCE UPRISING	72	69%	
FORBIDDEN SIREN	44	80%	
FORD RACING 3	56	34%	
FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE	54	74%	
FORMULA ONE 2004	52	65%	
FREAK OUT	13	79%	
FREAKY FLYERS	42	77%	
FREEDOM FIGHTERS	40	**92%**	
An utterly compelling squad-based shooter.			
FREEKSTYLE	25	59%	
FREESTYLE METAL X	40	74%	
FREQUENCY	23	64%	
FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	61	85%	
FUR FIGHTERS	10	86%	
FUTURAMA	37	75%	
FUTURE TACTICS	57	64%	
G1 JOCKEY 3	34	43%	
GALERIANS: ASH	34	50%	
GALLOP RACER 2	60	34%	
GAMETRAK: DARK WIND	54	55%	
GAMETRAK: REAL WORLD GOLF	68	74%	
GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS	71	40%	
GENJI	66	84%	
GET ON DA MIC	56	49%	
GETAWAY, THE	31	78%	
GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY, THE	56	71%	
GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX	62	47%	
GHOST RECON	30	65%	
GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM	47	75%	
GHOST RECON 2	57	63%	
GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO	17	80%	
GIFT	12	51%	
GITAROO MAN	22	79%	
GLADIUS	42	52%	
GOD OF WAR	62	**92%**	
God Of War grabs you by the balls and doesn't let go.			
GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE	47	65%	
GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT	56	58%	
GRADIUS V	51	83%	
GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE	31	85%	
GRAND THEFT AUTO 3	16	**92%**	
Its scope and and tiny touches are some of the most impressive yet.			
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	29	**97%**	
The music, the styling, the freedom... (almost) notning beats it			
GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	56	**99%**	
Simply the best game on PS2. Mind-boggling.			
GRAND TOUR RACING GT-R 400	51	53%	
GRAN TURISMO 3	13	**93%**	
The most complete racing game yet.			
GRAN TURISMO 4	59	**92%**	
Still the most serious racing sim on PS2.			
GRAN TURISMO 4: PROLOGUE	50	79%	
GRAVITY GAMES BIKE: STREET, VERT, DIRT	28	48%	
GREAT ESCAPE, THE	39	73%	
GREGORY HORROR SHOW	42	70%	
GROOVE RIDER	45	52%	
G-SURFERS	16	49%	
GUILTY GEAR X2	35	84%	
GUILTY GEAR ISUKA	65	79%	
GUMBALL 3000	29	73%	
GUITAR HERO	71	**90%**	
The most fun possible while making a complete show of yourself.			
GUN	69	88%	
GUNBIRD: SPECIAL EDITION	62	39%	
GUNDAM: FEDERATION VS ZEON	29	39%	
GUNFIGHTER 2: REVENGE OF JESSE JAMES	35	40%	
GUNGRAVE OD	64	71%	
GUN GRIFFON BLAZE	07	70%	
HALF-LIFE	16	**90%**	
A port of one of the best PC games ever made. This is a must-buy.			
HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS	31	65%	
HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE	70	51%	
HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN	51	76%	
HARRY POTTER: THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE	44	55%	
HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE	71	85%	
HAUNTING GROUND	62	78%	
HAUNTED MANSION, THE	46	70%	
HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING	29	81%	
HEADHUNTER	19	81%	
HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	53	53%	
HELLO KITTY: ROLLER RESCUE	71	59%	
HERDY GERDY	21	69%	

TOP FIVE

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1. FINAL FANTASY X
2. DARK CHRONICLE
3. DRAGON QUEST VIII
4. KINGDOM HEARTS
5. FINAL FANTASY X-2

ACTION GAMES

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS
2. RESIDENT EVIL 4
3. GOD OF WAR
4. ONIMUSHA 3
5. DEVIL MAY CRY

FOOTBALL

1. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5
2. FIFA 2005
3. LMA MANAGER 2004/2005
4. RED CARD SOCCER
5. THIS IS FOOTBALL 2005

ALL-TIME BEST

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS
2. RESIDENT EVIL 4
3. METAL GEAR SOLID 3
4. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5
5. TIMESPLITTERS 2

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
HEROES OF THE PACIFIC	67	79%	
HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL	24	71%	
HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN	28	89%	
HITMAN: CONTRACTS	49	**90%**	
A game that promotes experimentation and plays brilliantly.			
HOTWHEELS VELOCITY X MAXIMUM JUSTICE	31	51%	
HULK, THE	38	70%	
HUNTER WAYWARD: THE RECKONING	41	30%	
HYPER STREET FIGHTER II: 15TH ANNIVERSARY EDT.	46	89%	
ICO	71	**93%**	
Now it's re-released, you *must* play this ultra-emotional epic.			
INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION	66	88%	
INCREDIBLES, THE	57	72%	
INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER	70	50%	
INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB	39	80%	
INDYCAR SERIES 2005	53	63%	
I-NINJA	45	85%	
INTERNATIONAL CUE CLUB	24	56%	
ISLAND EXTREME STUNTS	33	65%	
ISS3	34	78%	
ITALIAN JOB: LA HEIST, THE	40	51%	
JACKED	72	34%	
JADE COCOON 2	22	70%	
JAK & DAXTER	18	85%	
JAK 2: RENEGADE	40	**93%**	
Vast, well-built and bursting with distractions.			
JAK 3	56	88%	
JAK X	68	84%	
JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING	46	77%	
JAMES BOND 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE	69	69%	
JAMES BOND 007 IN AGENT UNDER FIRE	17	88%	
JAMES BOND 007 IN... NIGHTFIRE	30	78%	
JET SKI RIDERS	18	38%	
JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX	20	38%	
JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH	40	83%	
JUICED	62	68%	
JUNGLE BOOK GROOVE PARTY	10	50%	
JURASSIC PARK: OPERATION GENESIS	34	61%	
KAIDO RACER	71	53%	
KATAMARI DAMASHII	49	83%	
KARAOKE STAGE	49	85%	
KENGO	09	60%	
KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER	28	75%	
KESSEN II	20	66%	
KESSEN III	61	82%	
KILL.SWITCH	44	78%	
KILLER7	64	83%	
KILLZONE	55	88%	
KING ARTHUR	57	37%	
KING OF FIGHTERS 2002	64	58%	
KING OF FIGHTERS: MAXIMUM IMPACT	61	79%	
KING OF ROUTE 66	41	44%	
KINGDOM HEARTS	29	88%	
KING KONG	69	72%	
KLONOA 2	10	73%	
KNIGHT RIDER 2	57	21%	
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001	07	79%	
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002	21	83%	
KURI KURI MIX	10	78%	
KYA: DARK LINEAGE	45	73%	
LA PUCELLE TACTICS	52	80%	
LA RUSH	67	75%	
LEGEND OF KAY	59	69%	
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2	33	68%	
LEGION: LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR	27	70%	
LEGO STAR WARS	62	78%	
LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE	54	80%	
LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS	58	55%	
LE MANS 24 HOURS	12	73%	
LETHAL SKIES	27	63%	
LETHAL SKIES 2	48	68%	
LE TOUR DE FRANCE	23	75%	
LE TOUR DE FRANCE: CENTENARY EDITION	38	71%	
LMA MANAGER 2005	55	80%	
LMA MANAGER 2006	68	85%	
LONDON RACER: WORLD CHALLENGE	40	59%	
LOONY TUNES SPACE RACE	19	65%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING	43	84%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE	55	53%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS	29	76%	
LOTUS CHALLENGE	16	60%	
MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER	38	79%	
MADAGASCAR	65	56%	
MADDEN NFL 2005	54	82%	
MADDEN NFL 2006	69	85%	
MAD MAESTROS	22	70%	
MAFIA	46	71%	
MAKAI KINGDOM	70	83%	
MALICE	51	60%	
MANHUNT	43	**91%**	
Chilling, vicious and utterly remarkable Rockstar goodness.			
MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP	72	88%	
MARK OF KRI, THE	33	74%	
MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS	68	41%	
MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	29	84%	
MASHED: FULLY LOADED	62	70%	
MASTER RALLY	24	55%	
MATRIX: PATH OF NEO	69	81%	
MAXIMO	20	84%	
MAXIMO VS THE ARMY OF ZIN	42	81%	
MAX PAYNE	19	82%	
MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE	45	65%	
MDK2 ARMAGEDDON	09	76%	
MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT	64	52%	
MEGA MAN X8	59	45%	
MEN IN BLACK 2: ALIEN ESCAPE	26	42%	
MERCENARIES	58	88%	
METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM	41	87%	
METAL GEAR SOLID 2	17	**96%**	
Near perfectly balanced and worth every bit of the hype.			
METAL GEAR SOLID 3	57	**97%**	
We didn't think it could get better. We were wrong. A masterpiece.			
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE	33	78%	
METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE	73	**90%**	
Metal Gear 3, but online and entirely in Japanese. Brilliant.			
METAL SLUG 3	55	79%	

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
METAL SLUG 5	72	54%	
MIAMI VICE	58	13%	
MICRO MACHINES	30	59%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 2	37	80%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	61	**91%**	
The street racing genre at its peak, *Dub Edition* is sex on wheels.			
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES	45	48%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 2	55	71%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 3	67	12%	
MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING	23	61%	
MINI DESKTOP RACING	71	43%	
MINORITY REPORT	31	60%	
MONKEY MANIA	60	69%	
MONSTER HUNTER	62	70%	
MONSTERS, INC	19	41%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE	33	85%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION	54	85%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS	67	82%	
MOTO GP3	35	74%	
MOTO GP4	63	78%	
MOTOR MAYHEM	15	63%	
MR GOLF	34	56%	
MR MOSKEETO	22	52%	
MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2	10	**90%**	
A musical pandora's box, offering professional results to everyone.			
MTX MOTOTRAX	49	79%	
MUMMY RETURNS, THE	17	46%	
MUSIC 3000	35	81%	
MX 2002	14	78%	
MX RIDER	15	62%	
MX SUPERFLY	27	72%	
MX UNLEASHED	48	75%	
MX VS. ATV: UNLEASHED	61	78%	
MYSTIC HEROES	34	67%	
NANO BREAKER	59	59%	
NARC	62	45%	
NBA 2K3	35	70%	
NBA BALLERS	53	82%	
NBA JAM	42	77%	
NBA LIVE 2004	42	84%	
NBA STREET VOLUME 2	35	85%	
NBA STREET VOLUME 3	60	87%	
NEED FOR SPEED 2	55	87%	
NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED	69	88%	
NEXT GENERATION TENNIS 2003	38	55%	
NFL STREET	46	64%	
NFL STREET 2	61	55%	
NHL HITZ 2003	28	80%	
NHL HITZ: PRO	42	80%	
THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE XMAS: OOGIE'S REVENGE	67	61%	
NIGHTSHADE	46	73%	
NINJA ASSAULT	27	71%	
NINJABREAD MAN	69	32%	
NO ONE LIVES FOREVER	21	71%	
NY RACE	17	40%	
OBSCURE	54	80%	
ONI	07	62%	
ONIMUSHA 2	27	89%	
ONIMUSHA 3	50	**92%**	
Provocative, exquisite gameplay backed up by plush visuals.			
ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS	45	75%	
OPERATION WINBACK	08	68%	
OUTLAW GOLF 2	57	78%	
OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL REMIXED	68	50%	
PAC-MAN WORLD 2	33	75%	
PAC-MAN WORLD 3	72	63%	
PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2	16	75%	
PARIS-DAKAR RALLY	15	60%	
PERFECT ACE PRO TENNIS	38	38%	
PETER PAN: LEGEND OF NEVERLAND	20	50%	

PILOT DOWN: BEHIND ENEMY LINES	65	53%	
PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION	47	71%	
PIRATES: LEGEND OF BLACK KAT	21	38%	
THE PLAN	72	48%	
PLAYBOY: THE MANSION	60	51%	
POLICE 24/7	19	49%	
POOL MASTER	05	45%	
POOL PARADISE	48	72%	
POOL SHARK 2	7	56%	
PORTAL RUNNER	16	55%	
PREDATOR: CONCRETE JUNGLE	63	58%	
PREMIER MANAGER	31	80%	
PREMIER MANAGER 2004/2005	57	63%	
PRIDE FC	34	75%	
PRIMAL	33	79%	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN	56	87%	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES	70	77%	
PRISONER OF WAR	24	73%	
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	55	**94%**	
Incredible customisation and sublime control. Vital.			
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	68	**93%**	
The best Pro Evo yet – the most satisfying football game ever.			
PROJECT EDEN	14	86%	
PROJECT: SNOWBLIND	59	83%	
PROJECT ZERO 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY	45	82%	
PRO RALLY 2002	22	68%	
PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY	52	86%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79%

SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89%

GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

The Truth

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP,T, ZERO BULLSHIT

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
PSYCHONAUTS	65	90%	
Explore the mental landscapes of certified nutters. Superb.			
PTO IV	48	41%	
PUNISHER, THE	60	82%	
PUYO POP FEVER	46	85%	
QUAKE 3 REVOLUTION	08	85%	
RAINBOW SIX 3	47	77%	
RAINBOW SIX 4: LOCKDOWN	67	68%	
RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	24	56%	
RAPALA PRO FISHING	65	40%	
RATCHET & CLANK	29	91%	
A labour of love on every crafted level. Great stuff.			
RATCHET & CLANK 2	42	85%	
RATCHET & CLANK 3	56	92%	
PS2 platforming perfection. It gets no better than this. A must.			
RATCHET GLADIATOR	69	85%	
RAYMAN	18	48%	
RAYMAN REVOLUTION	05	68%	
RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC	34	80%	
RC REVENGE PRO	04	56%	
READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2	04	82%	
RED CARD	23	80%	
RED DEAD REVOLVER	49	86%	
RED FACTION	11	88%	
RED FACTION 2	29	85%	
RED NINJA: END OF HONOUR	61	73%	
REIGN OF FIRE	30	71%	
RESIDENT EVIL 4	68	97%	
Beautiful, visceral, horrifying and absolutely essential. Get it.			
RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X	13	80%	
RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM	37	68%	
RESIDENT EVIL SURVIVOR 2 CODE: VERONICA	20	41%	
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK	45	86%	
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK FILE 2	67	68%	
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN OP. RESURRECTION	38	80%	
REZ	18	66%	
RIBBIT KING	55	22%	
RICHARD BURNS RALLY	51	66%	
RIDGE RACER 5	01	72%	
RIDING SPIRITS	27	46%	
RIDING SPIRITS 2	50	48%	
RING OF RED	10	74%	
RISE TO HONOUR	47	71%	
ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY	30	69%	
ROBOT WARS: ARENAS OF DESTRUCTION	16	63%	
ROADKILL	44	72%	
ROCKY	29	84%	
ROCKY LEGENDS	55	66%	
ROLLERCOASTER WORLD	47	50%	
ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGS VIII	48	70%	
R: RACER EVOLUTION	45	37%	
RTX RED ROCK	38	55%	
RUGBY 2004	40	81%	
RUGBY 2005	63	61%	
RUGBY CHALLENGE 2006	70	64%	
RUMBLE RACING	10	76%	
RUMBLE ROSES	59	69%	
RUNE: VIKING WARLORD	13	56%	
RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE	33	78%	
RYU GA GOTOKU	71	80%	
SAMURAI JACK: THE SHADOW OF AKU	51	59%	
SAMURAI WARRIORS	52	80%	
SAMURAI WARRIORS: XTREME LEGENDS	59	66%	
SAMURAI WESTERN	65	79%	
SAVAGE SKIES	34	67%	
S.C.A.R. – SQUADRA CORSE ALFA ROMEO	63	50%	
SCOOBY DOO: MYSTERY MAYHEM	49	51%	
SCRABBLE 2003 EDITION	40	64%	
SECOND SIGHT	53	90%	
Beautiful design and a truly novel take on the stealth genre.			
SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY	45	76%	
SEEK & DESTROY	39	69%	
SEGA BASS FISHING DUEL	33	55%	
SEGA CLASSICS COLLECTION	72	41%	
SEGA RALLY 2006	72	68%	
SEGA SUPERSTARS	56	80%	
SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER	49	74%	
SHADOW HEARTS: COVENANT	60	84%	
SHADOW MAN: 2ECOND COMING	20	68%	
SHADOW OF MEMORIES	06	80%	
SHADOW OF ROME	58	85%	
SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS	69	91%	
Stab big monsters in one of PS2's most astonishing feats.			
SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG	70	60%	
SHARK TALE	55	29%	
SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	51	71%	
SHIN MEGAMI TENSAI: LUCIFER'S CALL	64	85%	
SHINOBI	35	75%	
SHOX	28	61%	
SHREK 2	51	78%	
SHREK SUPER SLAM	70	70%	
SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	50	72%	
SILENT HILL 2	15	88%	

ANDY'S TOP FIVE

ANDY IS THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD TO OWN GITAROO MAN.

1 SILENT HILL 2

Five years later and it's still the most intelligent adventure on PS2. Repulsive and grotesque, but also beautiful.

2 ICO

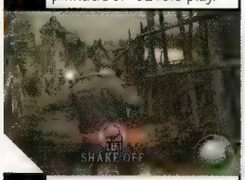
The complete polar opposite of *Silent Hill*. Gorgeous, dreamlike and subtle, but also deeply sinister. Stunning.

3 GITAROO MAN

Battle against bees, sharks, skeletons and flying saucers with a magical space guitar. The best rhythm action game ever.

4 DARK CHRONICLE

RPGs as rewarding and playable as they are vast are few and far between, but this opus is the pinnacle of PS2 role-play.



5 RESIDENT EVIL 4

Do you own this? If you don't, quite simply, you're mad. The greatest action game ever made, and absolutely gorgeous too.

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
SILENT HILL 3	36	87%	
SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	52	74%	
SILENT SCOPE 3	31	54%	
SILPHEED	03	51%	
SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN	42	77%	
SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE, THE	16	76%	
THE SIMS	31	85%	
THE SIMS 2	69	75%	
THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT	44	79%	
SINGSTAR	49	90%	
For people who don't like games. And for people who love games.			
SINGSTAR POPWORLD	62	70%	
SINGSTAR 80'S	68	81%	
SKY ODYSSEY	08	79%	
SLAM TENNIS	25	77%	
SLY RACCOON	31	80%	
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES	55	81%	
SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES	69	87%	
SMASH CARS	39	54%	
SMASH COURT TENNIS: PRO TOURNAMENT 2	50	85%	
SMUGGLER'S RUN	03	75%	
SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORY	17	77%	
SNIPER ELITE	67	80%	
SNK VS CAPCOM: SVC CHAOS	59	78%	
SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS	30	82%	
SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS	44	90%	
Immersive and dramatic – worth hooking up to broadband for.			
SOCOM 3: US NAVY SEALS	70	78%	
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE: GOLD EDITION	23	64%	
SONIC HEROES	46	66%	
SOUL CALIBUR 2	40	93%	
The very best fighter money can buy.			
SOUL CALIBUR III	69	89%	
SONIC MEGA COLLECTION PLUS	58	69%	
SONIC GEMS	68	55%	
SOUL REAVER 2	17	78%	
SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR	67	88%	
SPAWN ARMAGEDDON	47	69%	
SPEED KINGS	37	55%	
SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY	46	64%	
SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE	24	70%	
SPIDER-MAN 2	51	92%	
Best movie license ever. Best superhero game ever. Best *GTA* clone.			
SPINDRIVE PING PONG	62	32%	
SPLASHDOWN	16	75%	
SPLASHDOWN 2: RIDERS GONE WILD	40	75%	
SPLINTER CELL	34	91%	
The ultimate 'boys with toys' action adventure that's full of surprises.			
SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY	61	88%	
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	51	88%	
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE, THE	59	43%	
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: MOVIN' WITH FRIENDS	58	29%	
SPY FICTION	54	75%	
SPY HUNTER 2	46	67%	
SPYTOY	67	65%	
SPY VS. SPY	61	32%	
SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY	30	68%	
SSX ON TOUR	68	83%	
SSX TRICKY	16	95%	
Edgy, funky, cool – compulsive gameplay and pure fun.			
SSX3	41	94%	
Makes you feel good about life. Responsive and thrilling.			
STAR OCEAN 3	55	85%	
STARSKY & HUTCH	38	77%	
STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE	23	75%	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT	54	77%	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT 2	69	80%	
STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER	31	62%	
STAR WARS: EPISODE III REVENGE OF THE SITH	63	48%	
STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER	22	80%	
STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER	09	85%	
STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS	33	69%	
STATE OF EMERGENCY	20	75%	
STOLEN	62	38%	
STREET FIGHTER EX3	05	79%	
STREET RACING SYNDICATE	62	62%	
STUNT GP	16	38%	
STUNTMAN	26	74%	
SUFFERING, THE	48	86%	
SUFFERING 2: TIES THAT BIND	67	73%	
SUIKODEN 3	39	66%	
SUIKODEN IV	63	65%	
SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL	39	56%	
SUMMONER	07	70%	
SUMMONER 2	29	73%	
SUM OF ALL FEARS, THE	29	57%	
SUPER BUST-A-MOVE	04	78%	
SUPERFARM	42	60%	
SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS	29	48%	
SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE	66	84%	
SWAT GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM	42	82%	
SWING AWAY GOLF	05	70%	
SX SUPERSTAR	38	53%	
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN	50	75%	
TAITO LEGENDS	68	45%	
TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS	64	72%	
TAZ: WANTED	28	70%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	47	56%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2: BATTLE NEXUS	58	23%	
TEKKEN 4	27	90%	
Way more of everything than the stopgap *Tournament* title. Brilliant.			
TEKKEN 5	61	91%	
And even better again – the ultimate *Tekken*.			
TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	04	87%	
TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS	63	68%	
TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN	34	70%	
TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE	28	49%	
TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	55	66%	
TEST DRIVE: OFFROAD WIDE OPEN	16	44%	
THEME PARK WORLD	05	68%	
THING, THE	27	83%	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2004	47	75%	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2005	56	68%	
THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX	14	70%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	54	82%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006	67	78%	

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
TIME CRISIS 2	16	78%	
TIMESPLITTERS 2	28	95%	
Stunning multi-player PLUS a massive single-player mode.			
TIMESPLITTERS 3: FUTURE PERFECT	59	90%	
Now rather more soulless than before. Still superb, though.			
TOCA RACE DRIVER	26	82%	
TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	54	90%	
Tracks, cars and – vitally – racing are all super.			
TOCA RACE DRIVER 3	72	90%	
Just as superb as the last one. Vital for petrolheads.			
TOKYO ROAD RACE	36	45%	
TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS	38	58%	
TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND	68	86%	
TONY HAWKS UNDERGROUND 2	55	89%	
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	30	94%	
Lacks the impact of *THPS3*, but we suggest you get this version first.			
TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL	04	62%	
TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONE	16	67%	
TOP SPIN	68	61%	
TORINO '06: WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES	71	57%	
TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005	56	56%	
TOTAL IMMERSION RACING	31	74%	
TOTAL OVERDOSE	67	90%	
GTA in Mexico, basically, but with stacks of class. Terrific.			
TRANSFORMERS	49	84%	
TREASURE PLANET	29	75%	
TRIBES: AERIAL ASSAULT	37	74%	
TRUE CRIME	43	74%	
TRUE CRIME 2: NEW YORK CITY	70	71%	
TUROK EVOLUTION	27	71%	
TT SUPERBIKES	63	41%	
TWISTED METAL: BLACK	13	80%	
TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 2	55	38%	
U MOVE SUPER SPORTS	57	63%	
UEFA CHALLENGE	12	56%	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004-2005	59	62%	
UEFA EURO 2004	49	70%	
UFC: SUDDEN IMPACT	51	70%	
UFC: THROWDOWN	27	75%	
ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN	68	79%	
UNDER THE SKIN	58	70%	
UNLIMITED SAGA	42	41%	
UNREAL TOURNAMENT	07	82%	
URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	45	72%	
URBAN REIGN	71	78%	
URBZ – SIMS IN THE CITY, THE	56	50%	
USA RACER	36	37%	
VAMPIRE NIGHTS	21	59%	
VAN HELSING	49	67%	
VIB RIPPLE	52	58%	
VICTORIOUS BOXERS	14	80%	
VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE	54	71%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE	54	88%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE 2	58	85%	
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION	36	87%	
VIRTUAL-ON: MARZ	39	56%	
VIRTUA TENNIS 2	30	88%	
V-RALLY 3	24	81%	
WACKY RACES	11	63%	
WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED: FT. SHAUN MURRAY	37	65%	
WALLACE AND GROMIT IN PROJECT ZOO	41	69%	
WALLACE AND GROMIT: CURSE O/T WERE-RABBIT	68	72%	
THE WARRIORS	68	87%	
WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR	40	65%	
WAR OF THE MONSTERS	34	69%	
WAY OF THE SAMURAI	50	80%	
WDL THUNDER TANKS	06	69%	
WE LOVE KATAMARI	69	82%	
WHIPLASH	46	72%	
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE 2	17	53%	
WILD ARMS 3	33	71%	
WILD WILD RACING	03	71%	
WINNING ELEVEN 9	66	91%	
As close to real football as you'll ever see on your PS2.			
WIPEOUT FUSION	19	73%	
WITHOUT WARNING	68	49%	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2004	51	80%	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY	48	55%	
WORLD WAR ZERO: IRONSTORM	48	77%	
WORMS 3D	42	80%	
WORMS4: MAYHEM	64	47%	
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 4	55	87%	
WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2005	61	68%	
WRC: RALLY EVOLVED	68	89%	
WRECKLESS: THE YAKUZA MISSIONS	30	38%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW	56	85%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW 2006	69	83%	
WWF SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT	16	80%	
WORLD POKER TOUR	70	43%	
THE X-FACTOR SING	69	18%	
XGRA: EXTREME G	40	75%	
X-MEN LEGENDS 2: RISE OF APOCALYPSE	68	71%	
X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION	31	67%	
X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	36	75%	
X SQUAD	06	59%	
YETISPORTS ARCTIC ADVENTURES	65	44%	
YU-GI-OH!: DUELLISTS OF THE ROSES	41	62%	
ZOE 2: THE 2ND RUNNER	35	79%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79%

SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89%

GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

TOP FIVE

PSP GAMES

1. GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES
2. VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR
3. LUMINES
4. BURNOUT LEGENDS
5. RIDGE RACER

SOUNDTRACKS

1. GTA: VICE CITY
2. TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY
3. DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY
4. BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN
5. FIFA 06

CRAP THAT OUT-SOLD GOD OF WAR

1. THE URBZ
2. SCOOBY DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM
3. CHARLIE & THE CHOC. FACTORY
4. THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE
5. 50 CENT: BULLETPROOF

JAMS

1. JAMMING IN GUITAR HERO
2. LUCAS JAMMING IN FAHRENHEIT
3. DEF JAM
4. CAPCOM FIGHTING JAM
5. JAMS BOND

PSP REVIEWS

Every PSP game PSM2 has ever reviewed. Look! Down there!

NEW ENTRY

TALKMAN

Get a giant blue bird to ask pretty foreign girls for intercourse. Then get slapped.

NEW ENTRY

FIFA STREET 2

Yo. Word. Blazin' da s-ball goalside, muthas! We gotta da skeee-illzzz! And so forth.

NEW ENTRY

LEMMINGS

Had enough of ports of PS2 games from 2006? How about a game from 1991 instead? Oh.

APE ACADEMY	66	85%
BURNOUT LEGENDS	**67**	**92%**
Like being smashed in the face in the best way possible. Stunning.		
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER	70	51%
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	66	84%
CODED ARMS	67	52%
THE CON	69	45%
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING	70	65%
DARKSTALKER CHRONICLES	66	74%
DEATH JR	69	47%
EVERYBODY'S GOLF	66	81%
EXIT	72	84%
F1 GRAND PRIX	66	71%
FIFA 06	69	81%
FIFA 2005	66	68%
FIFA STREET 2	72	61%
FIRED UP	66	54%
FRANTIX	70	20%
GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES	**69**	**90%**
GTAIII Remixed, in essence, but still an absolute stormer of a game.		
GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX	70	50%
GO! SUDOKU	70	60%
GRIPSHIFT	70	78%

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE	70	51%
INFECTED	71	77%
KAO CHALLENGERS	70	69%
KING KONG	71	56%
LEMMINGS	72	78%
LORD OF THE RINGS TACTICS	69	80%
LUMINES	66	85%
MADDEN NFL 06	72	71%
MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS	70	58%
MEDIEVIL RESURRECTION	66	67%
METAL GEAR ACID	66	57%
METAL GEAR ACID 2	72	80%
MERCURY	67	85%
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3	66	87%
NAMCO BATTLE MUSEUM	70	54%
NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED	70	68%
NBA LIVE 06	72	74%
NBA STREET SHOWDOWN	66	80%
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND RIVALS	66	84%
NFL STREET 2	66	72%
PRINCE OF PERSIA: REVELATIONS	71	76%
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	69	80%
PURSUIT FORCE	68	80%

RIDGE RACER	66	88%
THE SIMS 2	71	67%
SOCOM US NAVY SEALS: FIRETEAM BRAVO	71	83%
SPIDER-MAN 2	66	50%
SMART BOMB	66	36%
SSX ON TOUR	69	79%
STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2	70	80%
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX	72	84%
TALKMAN	72	79%
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	66	76%
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006	69	72%
TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	66	79%
TOKOBOT	71	65%
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX	66	81%
UNTOLD LEGENDS: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE	66	66%
VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR	**66**	**91%**
A 'must have' title. The best sports sim on PSP.		
WINNING ELEVEN 9	68	79%
WIPEOUT PURE	66	84%
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	66	80%
WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2005	67	70%
WORLD TOUR SOCCER	68	73%
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006	70	85%

NEW ENTRY

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

One of the bestest games ever comes to PSP, complete with wonky controls.

NEW ENTRY

EXIT

Another fun puzzler hits PSP. The format's getting better furnished for those, at least.

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79% | SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89% | GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

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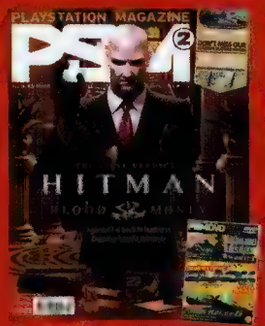

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PS2 / PSP tips

Pro-Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PLAYSTATION

Lie back, relax, and allow our gaming advice to melt away your PlayStation stress.

01 METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

SECRET THEATRE

Start a new game on Disc 1: Subsistence, then save the game. The Secret Theatre option will now be available on Disc 2: Persistence at the main menu.

MONKEY MASK

Get the top five high scores in the Snake Vs. Ape mini-game to unlock the Monkey Mask.

SECRET CAMOUFLAGE ROOM

Successfully complete both "New Game" types to unlock the Secret Camouflage room.

BANANA CAMOUFLAGE

Get the high score in each stage of the Snake Vs. Ape mini-game to unlock the Banana Camouflage.

DPM CAMOUFLAGE

Successfully complete Special Duel mode on Disc 2: Persistence to unlock the DPM Camouflage.

GREEN FACE PAINT

Successfully complete Normal Duel mode on Disc 2: Persistence to unlock the Green Face Paint.

02 CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

EASTER ISLAND STATUE

Have a saved game file from *Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence* on your memory card to get an Moai statue worth 5,000 gold.

PLAY AS TREVOR BELMONT

Successfully complete the game. Then, start a new game and enter "@TREVOR" as a name to play as Trevor Belmont. Trevor cannot craft items or use innocent devils.

CRAZY MODE

Successfully complete the game. Then, start a new game and enter "@CRAZY" as a name to play on the Crazy difficulty setting.

BOSS RUSH MODE

Successfully complete the game. Then, enter to a warp room to access Boss Rush mode.

MOEBIUS BROOCH

Successfully complete the game on the Crazy difficulty setting to unlock the Moebius Brooch at the shop. When this item is equipped it allows you to do special moves without using hearts.

SOUND MODE

Successfully complete Boss Rush mode to unlock the music box in the warp room. This item allows access to the "Sound Mode" option to play various music from the game.

03 KINGDOM HEARTS 2

DRIVE MODE TRAINING

Go to Timeless River and make sure your Drive is full. Pick any of the four doors in front of you and enter it. Kill all the Heartless in the area with any transformation, then return to Disney Castle before your Drive gauge is emptied. Once you return to Disney Castle, your Drive gauge will be full again. Keep doing this until your Drive level is at maximum.

DRIVE GAUGE REFILL

If your Drive gauge is almost empty while in your transformed state, quickly go to a save point and go to Gummi Ship. Then go to any world desired. When you are in the world selected your Drive gauge will be full.

ALTERNATE ENDING SEQUENCE

Successfully complete all worlds and Jiminy's Journal on the Standard difficulty setting to view an additional sequence after the ending credits. When playing on the Proud difficulty setting, successfully complete all worlds to view the sequence.

ALTERNATE APPEARANCE

Acquire the "Drive" ability, then during any "objective" based fights, complete the fight with a Drive activated and Sora will retain the transformation appearance for the story event that follows.

REMAIN IN TRANSFORMED STATE

If you are in a transformed state, simply ride a skateboard to stay in that transformed state, even if your Drive gauge goes to zero. However, if the gauge is already at zero and you get off the skateboard, you will then return to your regular form.

DEFEATING AXEL

This battle is a bit difficult because Axel has long range attacks. Since he launches most of his attacks straight ahead, approach him from the side. When his body envelopes in flames, this signals that a strong attack is coming, so get some distance between you and him, and get ready to avoid it.

DEFEATING DUSK

At the start of the battle, you will find that your weapon has no effect on Dusk. However, after a short while an intermission sequence will play and you will gain the Keyblade, which will allow you to damage him. It should only take five hits to defeat him.

PSP TIP

1 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

PLAY AS EX-M.BISON

Successfully complete Arcade mode. Then at the character selection screen, highlight M.Bison and hold Select while choosing him.

PLAY AS FINAL-VEGA

Successfully complete Arcade mode. Then at the character selection screen, highlight Vega and hold Select while choosing him.

PLAY AS SHIN AKUMA (GOUKI)

Successfully complete Arcade mode with Evil Ryu. Then at the character selection screen, highlight Akuma (Gouki) and hold Select while choosing him.

TIPS ROUND-UP

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

BULLETPROOF CRYPTO (invincibility)

Pause the game while playing as Crypto, then hold ↓ and press ⊗, R1, ⊡, ◎, R2, ⊡, ◎, ◎, START (↓), R3, ⊡, ◎, ⊗, L1, ⊡, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear.

AMMO-A-PLENTY (infinite ammunition)

Pause the game, then hold ↓ and press ◎, START, R2, ⊡, ◎, ↓, R2, START, ↙, ⊗, L1, ⊡, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear and you will have infinite ammunition.

DEEP THINKER (infinite concentration)

Pause the game, then hold ↓ and press ↙, ↓, R3, ⊡, ◎, R3, START, ↓, R2, ⊡, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. Your concentration meter must be above 10% or you will not be able to use any of your mental abilities.

POX UNLOCKS (all upgrades)

Pause the game while on the Mothership, then hold ↓ and press ⊗, L1, ⊡, ◎, R2, ⊡, ◎, ◎, START, ↓, R2, ⊡, ◎, ⊗, L1, ⊡, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. All upgrades for the currently unlocked weapons will be available for purchase from Pox's lab.

MMM... BRAINS! (increase DNA)

At the Mothership's main menu, hold ↓ and press ↙, ↓, ↓, ↓, ◎, START, R2, START, ◎, START, R2, START, ↓, ↙. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear and your DNA will increase.

AWARE LIKE A FOX (maximum alert meter)

Pause the game, then hold ↓ and press R2, START, ⊗, L1, ⊡, ◎, ↓, ↙, R2, START, ↓. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear and your alert meter will hit maximum.

NOBODY LOVES YOU (reset alert meter)

Pause the game, then hold ↓ and press ↓, R3, START, ↓, ↙, ⊗, L1, ⊡, ◎, R2, START. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear and your alert meter will reset.

04 PAC-MAN WORLD 3

ALL LEVELS AND MAZES

At the main menu, quickly press ◎ START, R2 START, ◎ START, R2 START, L1 ⊡ ◎, L2 to unlock levels and mazes.

05 ICO

MACE WEAPON

After reaching the top of the waterfall area, to the left of the switch you pulled is a tall tree. Swipe at it with your sword until you make contact. A ball will fall from its branches. Take the ball up the stairs, into the opened room, and drop it. You will notice tree arches between the two stairs going to the upper level of the room. Go to the middle arch and push on one side of it to make it revolve and reveal a secret room. Go back and take the ball (and Yorda) and enter the secret room . Hop into the idol pedestal with Yorda and a basket will appear. Take the ball and shoot it into the basket. A mace will fly through the window. It is more powerful then the sword and the two-by-four. You can take out a standard Ghout in three swings. To get the Mace, you do not need to do the "get the ball in the basket" routine. Before getting on the idol pedestal, actually place the ball in the square on the ground, where the basket will appear. When you step on the idol pedestal, the ball will fly up and land back in the basket.

LIGHTSABRE WEAPON

Successfully complete the game once, then start another game. Follow the steps to where you got the Mace in the first time, and this time you will get a lightsabre that kills Smoke Creatures in one hit. You must be holding Yorda's hand to activate it.

SHARE A WATERMELON WITH YORDA

Ico can share a watermelon with Yorda at the very end of the action, but only on the second playthrough of the PAL version of the game. Just take Yorda one of the watermelons sitting in the sand dunes. They are also very satisfying to smash.

TWO-PLAYER MODE (PAL AND JAPANESE NTSC VERSIONS)

Successfully complete the game and wait for the credits to end. Once you regain control of Ico, look for Yorda near the seashore. A save prompt will appear after the final ending. Save the game and restart to have Yorda playable via controller two and new music.

ENGLISH SUBTITLES (PAL VERSION)

Upon completion of the game, not only do you get to control Yorda and have different music, but her subtitles are now in English rather than in hieroglyphics.

06 HELLO KITTY: ROLLER RESCUE

PLAY AS BADTZ-MARU

Successfully complete the game with the good ending and unlock Badtz-Maru's profile. Start a new game to have the option to play as Badtz-Maru.

BONUS SAILOR COSTUMES

Successfully complete a level with an "S" rank to unlock a bonus sailor costume.

CHEERLEADER COSTUME A

TIPS ROUND-UP

TIP

2 NBA LIVE 06

ATLANTIC DIVISION VINTAGE JERSEYS
Get a Silver or greater rank in all Tier 1 competitions in Superstar Challenge mode to unlock the Atlantic Division vintage jerseys.

NORTHWEST DIVISION VINTAGE JERSEYS
Get a Silver or greater rank in all Tier 2 competitions in Superstar Challenge mode to unlock the Northwest Division vintage jerseys.

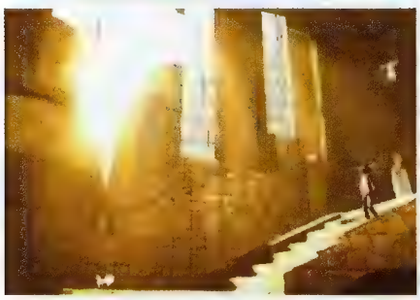
1960'S ALL-STAR TEAM
Get a Gold rank in all Tier 1 competitions in Superstar Challenge mode to unlock the 1960's All-Star team.

1970'S ALL-STAR TEAM
Get a Gold rank in all Tier 2 competitions in Superstar Challenge mode to unlock the 1970 All-Star team.

1980'S ALL-STAR TEAM
Get a Gold rank in all Tier 3 competitions in Superstar Challenge mode to unlock the 1980 All-Star team.

1990'S ALL-STAR TEAM
Get a Gold rank in all Tier 4 competitions in Superstar Challenge mode to unlock the 1990 All-Star team.

LEGENDS ON TEAMS
At the Roster Management menu, go to 'Sign/Release Players'. Then, switch to the Free Agent side and press L1. You will see legends such as Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlin.



Successfully complete all the cheerleader blocks in the Messy Park level to unlock the Cheerleader costume A.

CHEERLEADER COSTUME B
Unlock Cheerleader costume A, then defeat all the cheerleaders in the Messy Park level once again to unlock Cheerleader costume B.

SO LONG! ROUND EARTH! CINEMATIC
Intentionally lose against the final countdown Boss to unlock the So Long! Round Earth! cinematic for purchase.

THE TASTE OF VICTORY CINEMATIC
Defeat the final countdown Boss to unlock The Taste Of Victory cinematic for purchase.

ALTERNATE TITLE AND LOADING SCREENS
Set the system date to any day in November to get Hello Kitty birthday-themed title and loading screens.

07 PSYCHONAUTS

ALL PSI POWERS
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press R2, ○, ◎, ↓, ○, R2, ○, ◎, ↓, ↘, ○, R2, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

MAXIMUM RANK AND ALL PSI POWERS
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press ↘, ↘, ↘, ↓, R2, ○, ◎, ↓. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

ALL POWERS UPGRADED
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press R2, ○, ◎, ↓, ○, R2, ◎, ↓, ↘, ○, R2, ◎ to upgrade all your powers to maximum. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

ALL ITEMS
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press ↘, R2, ○, ◎, ↓, ↓, ↘, ○, R2, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken. Note: This does not unlock the Psi-ball Colorizer nor all of the Dream Fluffs.

INVINCIBILITY
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press R2, ○, ◎, ↓, R2, ○, ◎, ↓, ○, R2, ◎, ↓. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

FULL LIVES

RUMBLE ROSES

BEACH AREA
At the main menu, press L1, △, R2, START, L1, △, R2, START, L1, △, R2, START, L1, △, ⊗, L1, ○, □, ◎, ◎, ◎, START to unlock the Beach area in exhibition mode. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

SWIMSUIT 1
At the main menu, press L1, △, ◎, START, L1, △, ◎, START, L1, △, ◎, START, L1, △, ⊗, L1, ○, □, ◎, ◎, ◎, START to unlock Swimsuit 1 in exhibition, story, and gallery modes. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

PLAY AS LADY X
Successfully complete story mode with all the default characters to unlock Lady X.

SONIC GEMS

HINTS
Allow a game to idle for over three hours to unlock the Hints option in the Extra menu.

UNLOCKING MUSEUM GAMES
Play *Sonic Gems Collection* once every day and accumulate over 24 hours of game play time. Then, start the game 30 to 70 times to unlock the different end Bosses to many classic Sonic games that you can play.

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

ADVANCED EXTRA LEVELS
Successfully complete the Advanced levels without using a single continue to unlock all the Advanced Extra levels.

BEGINNER EXTRA LEVELS
Successfully complete the Beginner levels without using a single continue to unlock all the Beginner Extra levels.

EXPERT EXTRA LEVELS
Successfully complete the Expert levels without using a single continue to unlock the Expert Extra levels.

MASTER LEVELS
Successfully complete the Expert and Expert Extra levels without using a single continue to unlock the Master levels.

MASTER EXTRA LEVELS
Successfully complete the Master levels without using a single continue to unlock the Master Extra levels.

ULTIMATE LEVELS
Successfully complete the Beginner, Advanced, and Expert levels in Challenge mode to unlock the Ultimate levels.

JAK X

PLAY AS KIERA
Finish Jak X to unlock Kiera.

PLAY AS KLEVER
Successfully complete the Beachfront Drive Circuit.

While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press ↘, ↓, ↓, R2, ○, ◎, ⊗, ↘. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

FULL AMMUNITION
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press ↘, ⊗, ↘, ↓, ○, R2, ◎, R2, ○, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

FULL ARROWHEADS
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press ⊗, ↘, ↓, ↓, ○, R2, ◎, ⊗. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken.

NEW TEXT
While playing the game, hold ↙ + ↙ and quickly press ↓, ⊗, ↘, ↓, ↓, R2, ○, ◎. If you entered the code correctly, the phrase "You cheated" will be spoken. This code replaces the characters' names with developer names, shows captions for all the dialogue, and changes the text to numbers and symbols.

08 GUITAR HERO

CHEAT MODE
At the main menu, quickly press Yellow, Orange, Blue(2), Orange, Yellow(2) to unlock all bonuses. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. Note: The game cannot be saved after this code is enabled. Repeat this code to disable its effect.

ROCK METER ALWAYS GREEN
At the main menu, quickly press Yellow, Blue, Orange(2), Blue, Blue, Yellow, Orange. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. You can repeat this code to disable its effect.

GUITARIST USES AIR GUITAR
At the main menu, quickly press Orange(2), Blue, Yellow, Orange. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. You can repeat this code in order to disable its effect.

GUITARIST USES GUITAR HERO SG
At the main menu, quickly press Blue, Orange, Yellow, Blue(2). If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. Repeat this code to disable its effect.

MONKEY AUDIENCE
At the main menu, quickly press Blue, Orange, Yellow(3), Blue, Orange. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. Repeat this code to disable its effect.

SKULL AUDIENCE
At the main menu, quickly press Orange, Yellow, Blue(2), Orange, Yellow, Blue(2). If you entered the code correctly, a message will then appear. You can repeat this code in order to disable its effect.

TOGGLE NO VENUES
At the main menu, quickly press Blue, Yellow, Orange, Blue, Yellow, Orange. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear. Only the band and crowd will be visible, with no background. You can repeat this code to disable its effect.

09 DEVIL KINGS

PLAY AS FROST
Successfully complete Conquest mode with Venus to unlock Frost.

PLAY AS HORNET
Successfully complete Conquest mode with Devil King to unlock Hornet.

PLAY AS IRON OX
Successfully complete Conquest mode with Scorpio to unlock Iron Ox.

PLAY AS PUFF
Successfully complete Conquest mode with Azure Dragon to unlock Puff.

PLAY AS Q-BALL
Successfully complete Conquest mode with Lady Butterfly to unlock Q-Ball.

PLAY AS TALON
Successfully complete Conquest mode with Red Minotaur to unlock Talon.

FIGHT YOUR OWN ARMY
Successfully complete Conquest mode with all characters.

10 25 TO LIFE

LEVEL BONUSES

LEVEL 1 – WAREHOUSE
Defeat 20 enemies: Flaming Beanie.
Get to your car: Freeze's Starting Outfit.
Take two Human Shields: 25 To Life Decals.

LEVEL 2 – APARTMENT
Cover up 4 tags: Black Bandana.
Defeat 25 enemies: Barbed Wire Hat.
Return to you car: Rick Ta Life Outfit.

LEVEL 3 – DOWNTOWN
Break into ATMs (shoot them): Gold Earrings.
Complete level without dying: White Sweatband.
Defet 25 Enemies: Westside Knife Tat.
Escape to your getaway car: Bank Robbing Outfit.

LEVEL 4 – CUL-DE-SAC
Achieve 20% Accuracy: Holster.
Apprehend 5 felons: Kneepads (press △ to take out the Zapper, stun them, go up to them and press ◎ to arrest).
Get the evidence to Mendoza's car: Officer Williams.
Keep your partner alive: Tactical Vest.

LEVEL 5 – CLUB
Achieve 25% Accuracy: Big Moustache.
Apprehend 4 drug dealers: ATF Decals (dealers are the white people with green jerseys).
Get to the subway: DJ Envy Outfit.
Register 8 Head Shots: Riot Helmet.

LEVEL 6 – SUBWAY
Achieve 30% Accuracy: Big Dawg Tat.
Defeat 24 enemies: Sideburns.
Free a cop: Full Tac Harness.
Trap Shaun in subway train: Shaun's Getaway Outfit.

LEVEL 7 – TIJUANA
Defeat 60 enemies: Clock Cap Decal.
Find Riggs at the club: Shaun's TJ Outfit.
Tag over 4 gang tags: Mexican Flag Bandana.

LEVEL 8 – CASINO
Defeat 45 enemies: Oozie Chest Tat.
Escape with loot: Federates' Outfit.

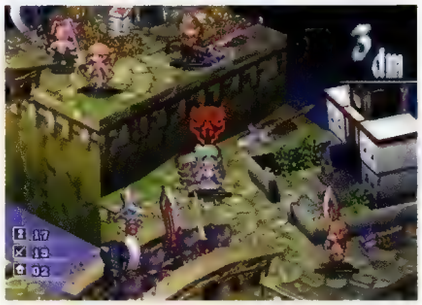
Register 12 headshots: Scorpion Black Tat.
Rob five cash carts: Triple Bracelets.

LEVEL 9 – PENTHOUSE
Defeat 32 enemies: Camo Pants.
Register 16 headshots: Chest Flame Tat.

LEVEL 10 – PRISON
Defeat 30 enemies: No Parole Decal.
Finish Level: Freeze's Prison Outfit.
Protect Lazarus: Chinese Pain Tat.

LEVEL 11 – MALL
Break into 5 ATMs: Black Gloves.
Complete level without dying: Red Hightops.
Finish level: Freeze's Mall Outfit.

LEVEL 12 – HACIENDA
Defeat 30 Enemies: G Cap Decal.
Find five secret stashes: Bulldog Chain. (They're all in vases. In the Waterpool Courtyard there are two stashes in the vases there. In front of the house on the right side in the yard is a stash in another vase. On the deck before entering



is yet another vase. And before you fight Shaun there is a vase with a stash in front on the spiral staircase. Your gran would love all these vases.)

PS2 TIP

3 CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

JAPANESE CRASH
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 and press ⊗, L1, ○, ○, R2, ○, ○, ⊗, L1, ○, △, R2, ○, △.

ONE-HIT KNOCK OUTS
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 and press ⊗, L1, ○, ↓, ⊗.

HIGH SPEED MODE
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 and press L1, ○, ↓, ○, R2, ○, ↓.

TOY BLOCK CARS
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 press R2, ○, ↓, ○, R2, ⊗, L1, ○, ○.

CHICKEN HEADS
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 and press ⊗, R2, ○, ↓, ⊗, L1, ○, ○.

DISABLE HUD
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 and press ⊗, ⊗, L1, ○, ○, ○, R2, ○, L1, ○, ○.

PLAY AS CRUNCH BANDICOOT
Give Crunch Bandicoot 2,500 Coins at Midway to unlock him.

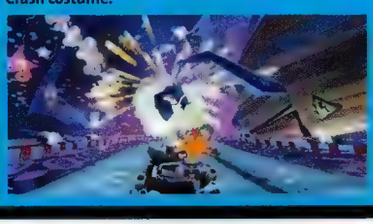
PLAY AS N. GIN
Give N. Gin the Green Plutonium at Midway to unlock him.

PLAY AS NINA CORTEX
Giver Nina Cortex the keys at Midway to unlock her.

PLAY AS PASADENA OPOSSUM
Give Pasadena Opossum one Power Crystal at Midway to unlock him.

PLAY AS VON CLUTCH
Give Von Clutch one Power Crystal at Midway to unlock him.

BABY CRASH COSTUME
Collect all the Die-O-Ramas to unlock the Baby Crash costume.



11 MAKAI KINGDOM: CHRONICLES OF THE SACRED TOME

PLAY AS ASAGI
Reach level 1,000 and get 100,000 mana. Select 'Challenge the next protagonist' in Zeta's wish system. Defeat Asagi.

PLAY AS BABYLON
Reach level 200 and get 9,000 mana. Select the 'Fight Babylon' option in Zeta's wish system, and defeat him.

PLAY AS CASTILLE
Reach level 100 and get 5,000 mana. Select the 'Fight with hero' option in Zeta's wish system, then defeat Castille.

PLAY AS CIDER
Reach level 160 and get 7,000 mana. Select the 'Fight against Cider' option in Zeta's wish system during Chapters 3 through 8, then defeat Cider.

PLAY AS DARK KING
Reach level 120 and get 5,500 mana. Select the 'Defeat Dark King' option in Zeta's wish system during Chapter 6 in your third cleared game, and defeat Dark King.

PLAY AS ETNA
Reach level 80 and get 4,000 mana. Select the "See the ending" option in Zeta's wish system, then defeat Flonne, Etna and Laharl.

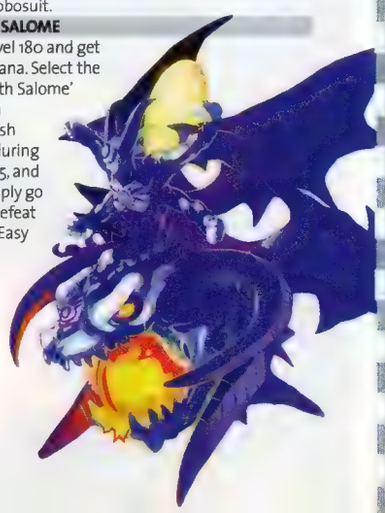
PLAY AS FLONNE
Reach level 70 and get 3,000 mana. Select the 'Fight ally of justice' option in Zeta's wish system, then defeat Flonne, Etna and Laharl.

PLAY AS PRAM
Kill over 60 allies before Chapter 9 and defeat Pram.

PLAY AS PRINNY
Reach level 10 and get 1,000 mana. Select the 'Make a Prinny' option in Zeta's wish system, then kill a Prinny.

PLAY AS ROBOSUIT
Reach level 200 and get 30,000 mana. Select the 'Want strongest robot' option in Zeta's wish system, and then defeat Robosuit.

PLAY AS SALOME
Reach level 180 and get 8,000 mana. Select the 'Fight with Salome' option in Zeta's wish system during Chapter 5, and then simply go on and defeat Salome. Easy as pie.



PSM2 MICRO GUIDE

All the hardest bits explained in one fat guide

THIS MONTH: MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

TAGGING THE TRAIN

First thing's first – run! Dash forward as soon as the level starts. You only have three minutes, so get to the first tag spot as quickly as possible. Whenever the train pulls into a station (you'll hear a mumbling tannoy seconds before), squeeze L1 to crouch under the overhead neon lights.

You also have to look out for flashing barriers. For the ones above you, hang off the side and for the others, cling to the roof. Listen for the bells. The trick is to remember where every tag is and when to avoid the barriers – learn the routine and you can beat the three-minute limit easily. When you reach each carriage, shimmy down and begin your piece. Use full pressure and keep the stick moving to avoid drips.

When the train approaches a narrow tunnel, hang off and jump to the carriage on the opposite side. Jump back across when it exits the tunnel. You can take a couple of hits from the barriers, but don't risk it because it also slows you down. The overhead lights do the most damage. Tag the three required spots (without dripping) indicated on the screenshot and the mission will end after 'Objective Completed' flashes up.

VANE HEADQUARTERS

CCK HEADQUARTERS

As soon as the level begins, run to your right and stealth kill the guard. Next to where he was standing are some pipes. Climb up. When you get inside there are two guards to deal with, one of whom has a rifle. Stealth kill the one to your left when he enters the booth and get the pipe. Dash towards the one on the right and smash him up with the pipe. If he hits the alarm another will come, but he won't get the chance if you do it right.

At the far end of the corridor you'll see another open window. Leap out and climb the pipes to reach your goal – the roof of the building. When you reach the roof you'll be presented with a spotlight, two guards and numerous tag points. Use instinct mode to see where they are. Learn the guards' patrol routes. They both have rifles so getting caught isn't an option. Both stand still at least once, so go for a stealth kill then.

There are two tag spots on the roof's air vents. You can actually get these without killing the guards, but it'll be much tougher. Finally, hit the heaven spot. Climb the sign at the front, abseil down and use Trane's roller to change 'CCK' to 'FUCCK'.

THE FAIRGROUND

"WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU CRACK BLACK"

BLACK THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Completing *Black* is only the start – here's how to unlock the Silver Weapons, find hidden items and nail levels quicker, more explosively and with less ammo.

1 RELOAD OBSESSIVELY

Every time you fell an enemy and are safely behind cover, *always* reload (tap ⊗) even if you think you don't have to. There's nothing more crippling than being jumped by three enemies, and running out of bullets mid-clip. Don't forget, bigger weapons like the RPG, M249, Magnum and (to a lesser extent) M16 take longer to reload (two-to-three seconds) so don't rely on them in a tight spot.

2 USE COVER

Hug every wall. Cover every angle. Hide behind every barrel. It's boring, but safety is the only way to complete some sections (and absolutely necessary for Hard difficulty). Try edging at an angle around blind corners/corridors so you can sneak peeks at enemies above/below you and pepper them with zoom shots (hold L1). You need every advantage you can get. Watch out for the type of cover you use – barrels, small walls and crates can be blown up and leave you exposed.

3 KNOW YOUR WEAPONS

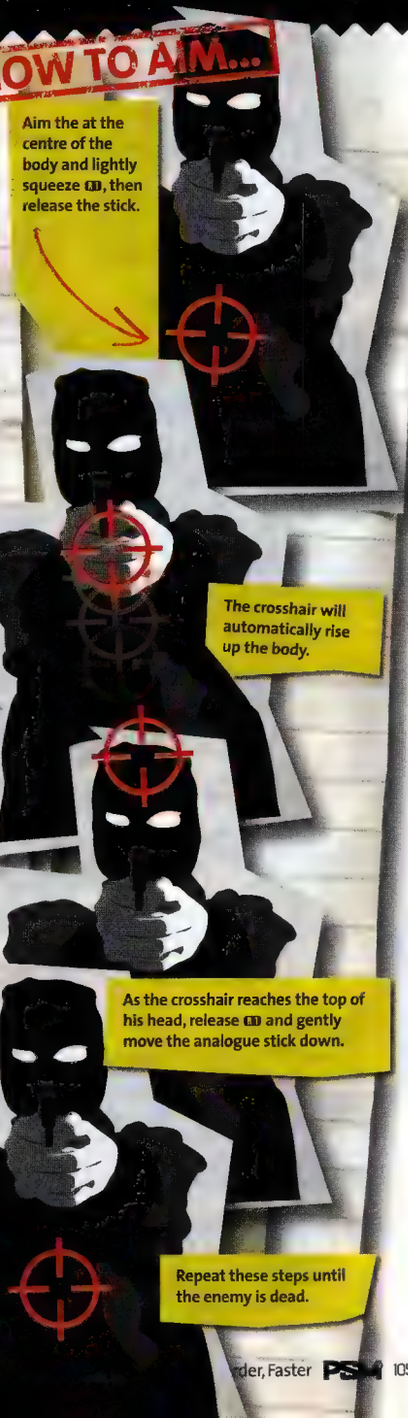
You can only carry two weapons, so use complementary pairings e.g. an automatic weapon (Uzi, M16 etc – powerful, useful when surrounded but less effective at range) and, say, a pistol or AK47 (discreet and accurate at long range for head shots) or a *highly* explosive weapon like an RPG. Here are some ideal weapon combos, in rough order of preference. (Note: heavy weapons like the magnum/RPG/M249/Uzi use ammo fast, and there's less scattered around, so using them as a pairing is risky. Beware when using two slow reloading weapons in tandem, also.)

M16/RPG
Uzi or Shotgun/Sniper Rifle
M249/Sniper Rifle or RPG
Shotgun or Magnum/AK47

4 HEAD SHOTS

A precision headshot – not to the face, but the *temple* – will take most soldiers down with one, or a few, bullets. If you've got time to zoom in from cover, always aim for the head, or you'll just alert the soldier to your position and give them chance to retreat/seek cover/shoot back. Only shoot for the body at close range or when surrounded – it's more important to stop the enemy from shooting, and give you chance to seek cover, rather than taking him down first time. Heavy automatic weapons 'spray' the enemy, but are more likely to 'freeze' your foe, than fell them instantly. The exception is shotgun blasts, which work first time on the body provided a) you're close up b) the enemy isn't wearing body armour.

HOW TO AIM...

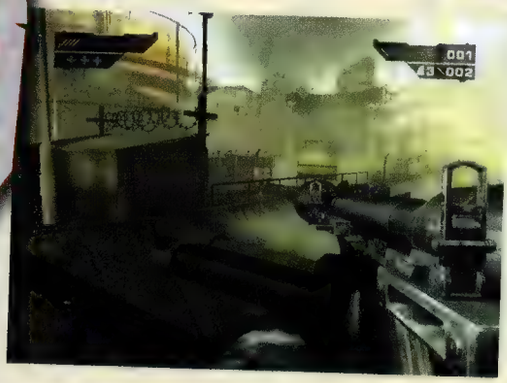

Aim the at the centre of the body and lightly squeeze L1, then release the stick.
The crosshair will automatically rise up the body.
As the crosshair reaches the top of his head, release L1 and gently move the analogue stick down.
Repeat these steps until the enemy is dead.

Pro Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PS2

5 USE THE SCENERY

The smartest way to attack groups of foes isn't to shoot the body, but the scenery. Always look out for red objects (barrels, pipes, fuel tanks) that will explode and take out everyone in the blast radius. Also look out for 'Black' objects – the ones that turn the cursor black when you target them. These include cars (watch the fuel tanks blow), pipes (steam) and pillars (like the ones in the opening level which collapse on the enemy). The game tends to 'stage' moments, so there's often an environmental way to take out enemies, rather than engage them one-on-one.

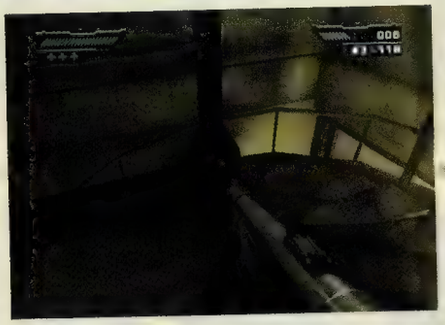


6 RATION MEDIPACKS

The Health Packs you can carry (accessed via tapping ↓ on the D-pad) are in short supply, so use them wisely. Conversely, if the bar's flashing red (or the screen pulsing grey – your last few breaths) don't take a risk, and use what you've got. As a general rule, don't collect the medikits (dropped by fallen guards) if you've only taken a bar or two of damage – you can always come back later. On Hard difficulty, there are no Health Packs (that you can carry), only medikits, so you need to collect them carefully. As a general rule, soldiers tend to drop medikits only when you're down to your last few bars, or when you hit them with a precision headshot/'Black' kill.

7 MOVE SMARTLY

It's the same as any FPS: always keep your weapon centered on spots of potential trouble so you can shoot instantly (e.g. keeping the target pointing at the bottom of the steps as you descend, or into the corridor as you turn a corner), keep your back to cover as often as possible (so you can't get shot from all angles/behind) and never run through no-mans land if you can duck between objects instead. As a general rule, always try to take the high road, so you can survey enemies below for maximum advantage.



UZI

Primary Fire: 9mm
Secondary Fire: N/A
Range: 2/5
Ammo Clip: 90
Power: 3/5
Key tip: Ideal for close-range, high-speed destruction.

8 SWITCH UP

If you ever run out of ammo during mid-tussle with an enemy, quickly switch your weapons (D-pad →), rather than waiting to reload. It could be the difference between life and death. For the same reasons, always make sure *both* weapons are fully reloaded at all times. This is important.

MP5

Primary Fire: Semi-automatic
Secondary Fire: N/A
Range: 3/5
Ammo Clip: 80
Power: 2/5
Key tip: Ideal compromise between speed/range/power.

9 LOB EFFECTIVELY

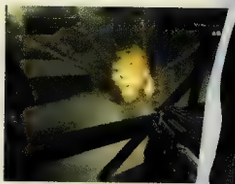
It doesn't matter how long you hold R2 when you lob grenades, but the angle you're facing that influences its direction/length of throw. You'll need to experiment to get the 'feel', but you can pinpoint lob grenades from a few feet (by facing the floor) or a screen length (almost 100 virtual metres) by lining up, then facing the sky as you throw. Observe:

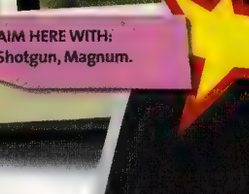
FLAT TRAJECTORY

LOBBED TRAJECTORY

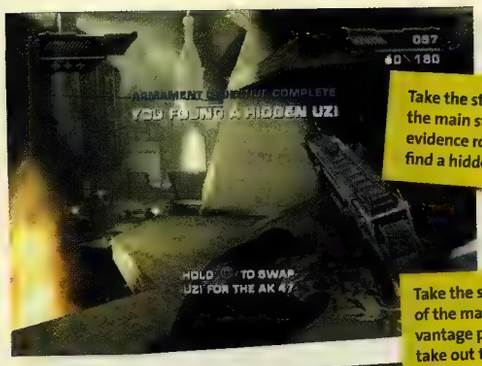
10 EXPOSE ENEMY WEAKNESS

The enemy are human too so take advantage of their weakness – e.g. wait until they've finished shooting, then surprise them as they reload. If a guy's got his head turned, shoot him from distance in the brain – don't alert him. *Black* isn't a stealth game, but guards can only use their line of sight– expose it. You can also shoot out windows to confuse/distract guards and disable their aim – perfect for a follow up grenade or M249 burst.



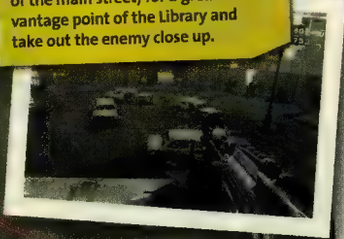


THE TOUGHEST BITS EXPLODED!

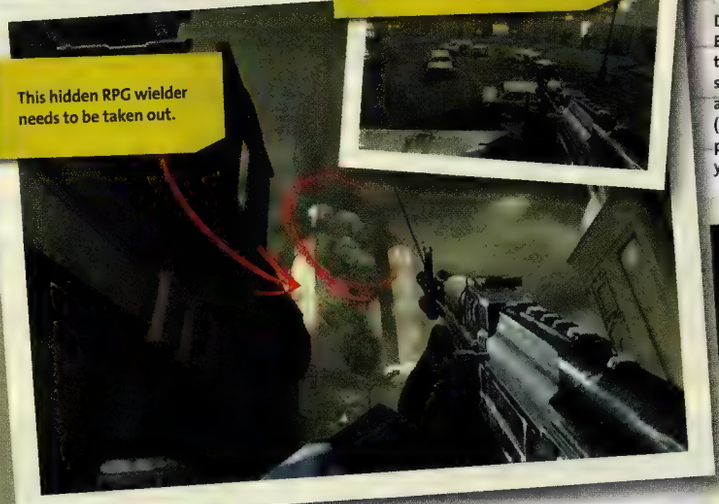


Take the stairs on the right of the main street (by the blue evidence roll in the alcove) to find a hidden Uzi.

Take the stairs opposite the Uzi (left of the main street) for a great vantage point of the Library and take out the enemy close up.



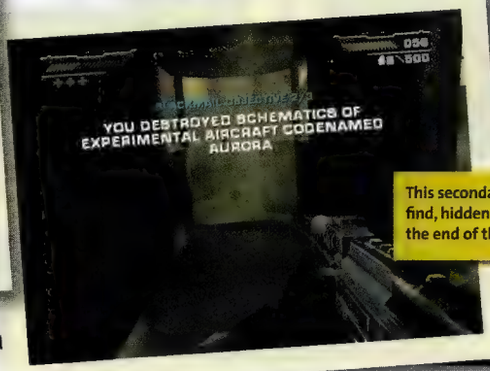
This hidden RPG wielder needs to be taken out.



VEBLENSK CITY STREET

Difficulty ● ● ● ● ● Best Time: 07.40m

Easy. Use the scenery as much as possible, and don't be fooled by the constant whistling of bullets. Use the red impact markers on-screen to see exactly what direction you're being shot from. There's a hidden Uzi by taking the stairs on the right on the main street (see photos). Don't forget to shoot the red explosive box by the pillars of the library. On Medium, there are loads of health packs, so you can be more gung-ho.



This secondary objective is hard to find, hidden in the toll cabin near the end of the level.

MAGNUM

Primary Fire: Manual
Secondary Fire: N/A
Range: 3/5
Ammo Clip: 6
Power: 4/5
Key tip: Aim carefully. It's a one-shot kill, but slow to reload.

Blue rolls are Secondary Objective evidence.

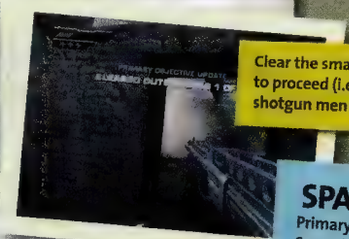
The mid-level bridge needs to be approached slowly, using lots of ranged grenade lobs to clear packs of soldiers – watch for extra grenades hidden on the bridge alcoves to the left/right. Use the cover.

TRENESKA BORDER

Difficulty ● ● ● ● ● Best Time: 45.06m

It doesn't really matter which way you go, since the paths are circular – you'll always end up in the right direction, despite the sprawling feel. Use the silenced pistol or silenced AK47 to headshot the forest patrols (found by descending right from the start point to the cave). At the first military base, use the explosive scenery, and pick men off individually (take out the sentry post guards above first). Use the cover/buildings (climb the stairs for a better vantage) and keep looking for red explosive objects to pick off groups from range. Once you've crossed the border, you'll meet the armoured shotgun guards – they'll drop after initial fire, but don't be fooled, since they'll get up again. These soldiers need to be dispatched with a shotgun headshot (x2). Search the main farm building (pictured), and descend slowly, picking off guards one-by-one. Methodically clear each out house to complete the level.

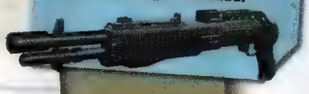
This is the main farm building. Climb to the roof to trigger the next objective.



Clear the smaller outbuildings to proceed (i.e. kill the shotgun men inside).

SPAS SHOTGUN

Primary Fire: Pump Action
Secondary Fire: N/A
Range: 1/5
Ammo Clip: 8
Power: 4/5 (at close range)
Key tip: Invaluable at close range, but target the head.



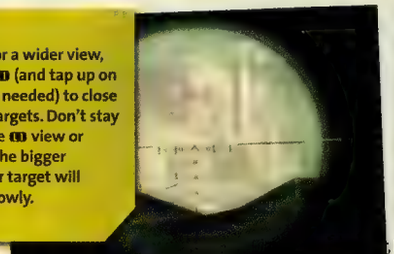
You need to survive a siege mid-way through the town section. Here are your targets...

NAZRAN TOWN

Difficulty ● ● ● ● ● Best Time: 45.38m

Use the flagstones to dodge the sniper (he's in the house on the second level). Use his rifle to clear the graveyard (only zoom in when you've got a clear shot) and un-holster it to see a wider view. Proceed to the two sniper points (in church buildings), and clear the paths. The Nazran town sniper alley is deadly. RPG firers and snipers will take you out in a few shots, so keep scanning the distant rooftops and crumbling foundations. Tease them into shooting, then reverse-engineer the bullet trail to suss their location. The key is to move slowly, clear every threat (albeit on a distant roof) and proceed. Repeat. Stay in the ditch, don't expose yourself, and use the building innards for cover.

Zoom out for a wider view, then press L1 (and tap up on the D-pad if needed) to close in on your targets. Don't stay locked in the L1 view or you'll miss the bigger picture/your target will move too slowly.



Pro Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PS2

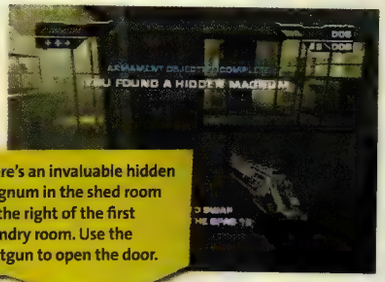
NASZRAN FOUNDRY

Difficulty ● ● ● ○ ○ Best Time: 45.38m

Use the starting vantage point, and exploit the scenery. Don't charge in, or the shotgun men will decimate you – use long-range headshots with the M16/rifle. Advance to the minefield. Spray it with bullets to clear a path/trigger a chain reaction killing nearby enemies. Shoot the big red boilers. In open environments like this, keep R1 permanently held down and go for headshots at range. Disable the foundry guards with keen eyes/clever use of explosive scenery. In the main building, three destruction targets are on the top level, the last one on the ground floor (shoot the tell tale red bits). The final, open, foundry room needs a slowly, slowly approach. Take out as many guards as possible from the cover of the first bend.

Shoot the barrels from the upper ground. Clear as many enemies as possible from this safe range.

Beware the mines. One shot should trigger a chain reaction.



There's an invaluable hidden magnum in the shed room on the right of the first foundry room. Use the shotgun to open the door.

Use this corner for cover and pick off foes with tedious L1 shots, however painful and slow it is.

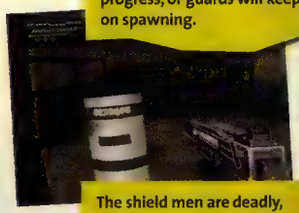
You need to blow four of these to progress.

TIVLIZ ASYLUM

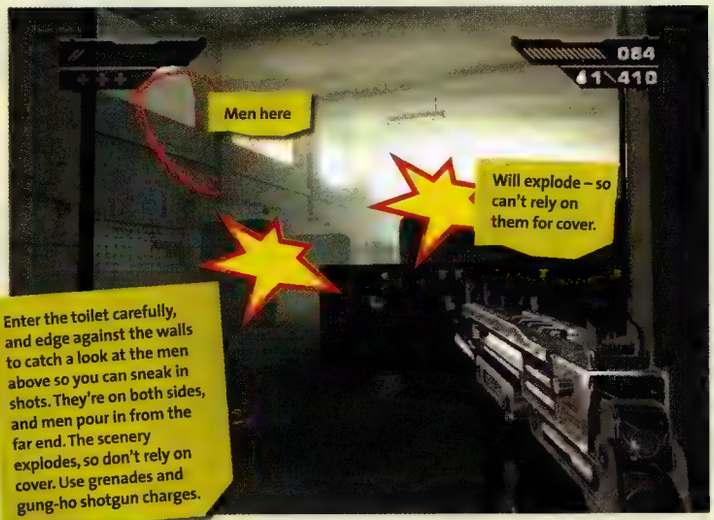
Difficulty ● ● ● ● ○ Best Time: 53.08m

Use the pistol, not the automatic, to pick guards off at range. Let your grunts lead and do the hard work, they won't get killed. Careful grenade use is vital here to clear the multiple obstructions. (NB: the Uzi is useless at long range.) The first RPG firer is above you by the metal panels on the gantry, the second on the gantry by the tail of the broken plane. The final one is in the window/gantry above the grenade nest of the main building. The main Asylum area has guards at all heights/angles, so snipe carefully. After blowing a path through the chipboard, locate the hidden M16 on the top left. You'll reach the toilet zone – one of the game's toughest/most destructive bits (see photos). Finally, you'll descend to the lower chambers. The shielded guards need to be grenaded/RPG'ed, or distracted, then shot from the rear. The final room is a killer, so run past the shield men and instantly to the second level, where you'll find grenades. Hole up in the room on the top right and let 'em come. Watch out – some guards drop through the roof. You need to blow the grenade nest (in the glass section) with grenades to progress.

Destroy this bunker (lob grenades through hole) to progress, or guards will keep on spawning.



The shield men are deadly, and require explosive force.



Enter the toilet carefully, and edge against the walls to catch a look at the men above so you can sneak in shots. They're on both sides, and men pour in from the far end. The scenery explodes, so don't rely on cover. Use grenades and gung-ho shotgun charges.

AK47

Primary Fire: Automatic
Secondary Fire: Semi-Auto
Range: 3/5
Ammo Clip: 60
Power: 2/5
Key tip: Decent zoom for long-range head shots, but slowish.

Lay siege to the fort with M249 fire/precision sniper shots. The scenery is laden with explosion points.

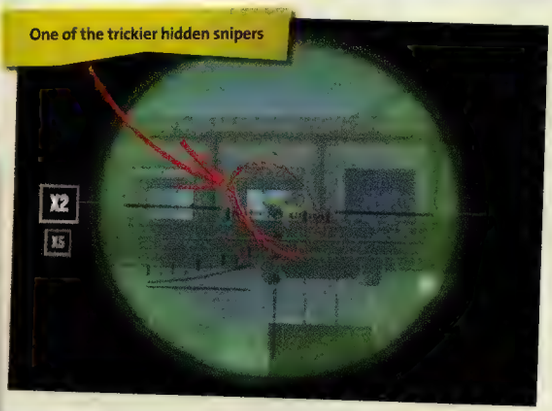
VRATSKA DOCKYARD

Difficulty ● ● ● ○ ○ Best Time: 45.38m

A welcome change of pace after the Asylum, with the emphasis on sniping and precision. Keep L1 permanently held down, and go for safety-first head shots. Equip the shotgun to storm aerial control rooms, and expect one or two armoured guards. When you get the Sniper Rifle, look for distant guards on containers, or in cranes. Things tough up after the Checkpoint – use cover boringly/wisely to tease out snipers' locations and go for safe, tight-angle, shots. In the 'siege' section (pictured left), use the explosive scenery to your maximum advantage. In the final run in, you'll face a lot of hidden snipers/RPG wielders. If the immediate area is clear, focus on them first – scan the upper crane gantrys on the top right, or the distant window interiors.

A good sniping spot.

Hidden M249

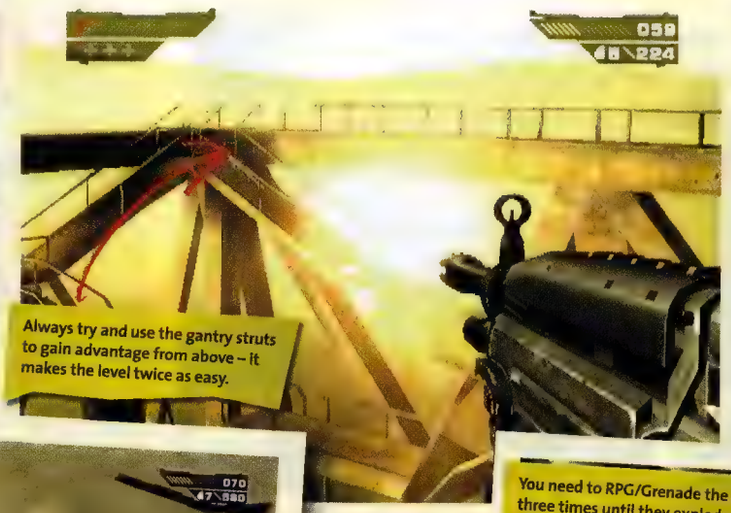


One of the trickier hidden snipers

GRAZNEI BRIDGE

Difficulty ● ● ● ● ● Best Time: 45.38m

The sunlight is one of your biggest enemies, obscuring long-range shots, so move around for a clear view. Don't forget – you can shoot guards on the bridge from the lower gantry so take your time with L1 head shots. Proceed methodically, cleaning out bus/barricades one at a time using careful grenade lobs/explodable nearby cars/M16 head shots. Use the buses/concrete ballasts as cover (and don't forget to duck). Swap the M16 for the M249 (below) after the first section, clear the immediate area, then use the gantrys on the far left or right. At the Checkpoint, when you go under the bridge, use precise head shots on unsuspecting sentries, and snipe foes above. The final section is littered with mines, so use the gantrys and isolate the RPG men. Use the 'great position' (third from left below) to resist the oncoming shield men. Wipe out every mine outside the fort – however boring – snipe slowly, and blow the final door with multiple grenade/RPG blasts. Just don't rush things.

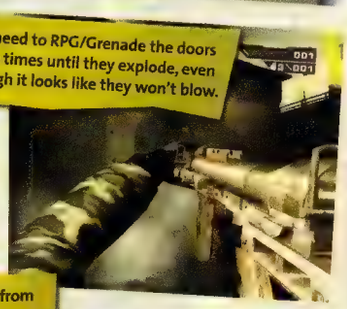


Always try and use the gantry struts to gain advantage from above – it makes the level twice as easy.

Hidden M249

These bastards need to be felled twice. Use head shots.

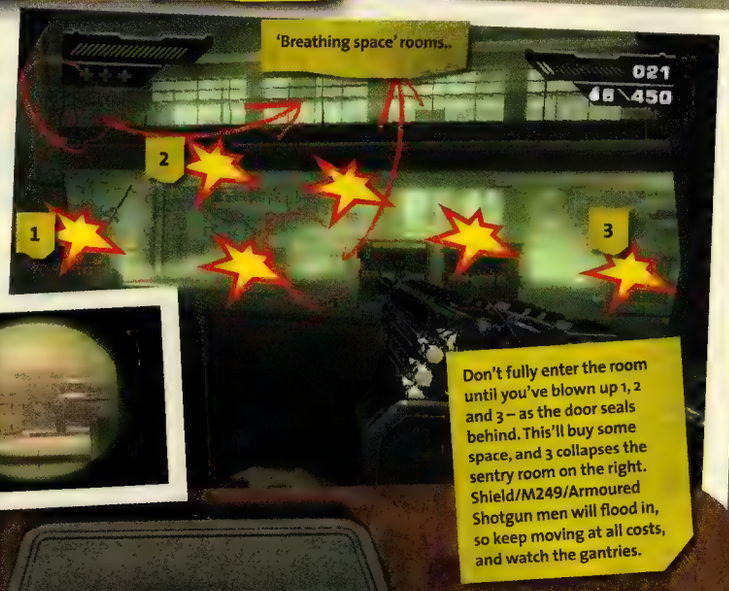
This is a great position from which to repel the enemy.


You need to RPG/Grenade the doors three times until they explode, even though it looks like they won't blow.

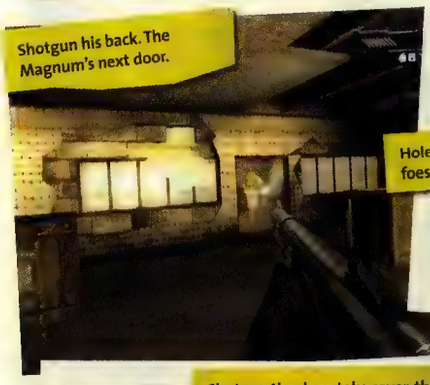
SPETRINIV GULAG

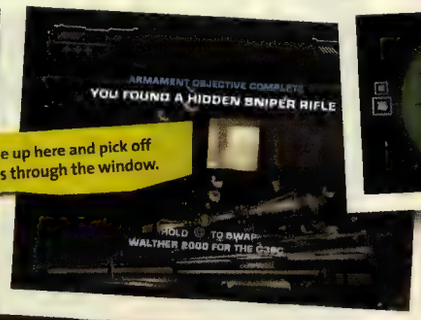
Difficulty ● ● ● ● ● Best Time: 45.38m

From the start, explore left and right for an MP5 Suppressor/Grenades. Descend the steps, follow left and blast the door – it starts here. Shoot sentry in the back (below) and swap the hidden Magnum on the table for the MP5. Use the Magnum to ascend (careful long shots only, ammo is scarce), watching for guards in the broken floorboards above/below. From the roof, descend into the outhouse, and snipe (see below) the RPG in the top left building. Proceed slowly, use the outhouse (on the stairs/left) to snipe/explode scenery of the main building, then enter. It's straightforward (ish) from here. Usual tactics apply, pair the Magnum/M249 and don't waste grenades. When you get stuck, grenade the suspicious brown door. The final room is evil (see right). Hit the explosion points in the order shown. Always take out RPG/M249 guards first, and use the aerial gantry rooms for breathing space. Clear the room and you've done it.

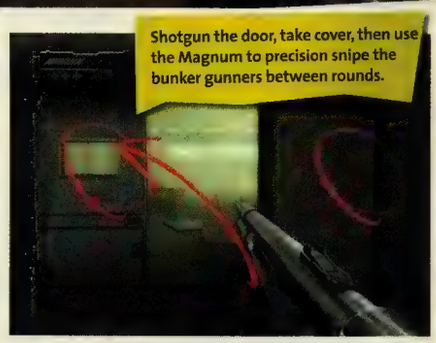


Don't fully enter the room until you've blown up 1, 2 and 3 – as the door seals behind. This'll buy some space, and 3 collapses the sentry room on the right. Shield/M249/Armoured Shotgun men will flood in, so keep moving at all costs, and watch the gantries.


Shotgun his back. The Magnum's next door.



Hole up here and pick off foes through the window.


Shotgun the door, take cover, then use the Magnum to precision snipe the bunker gunners between rounds.

HOW DO I UNLOCK...

BLACK OPS

Complete the game on Hard (no mean feat) to unlock Black Ops mode. This gives you new Destruction Objectives, and you'll need to complete all these, plus your Secondary Objectives, to finish each level. It's the ultimate in masochistic gaming (and too mental for us), so mail us a picture of the finishing screen if you ever get it done, and we'll give you a mention in the letters page with a picture of Rambo. Perhaps. Frankly, after completing the Spetriniv Gulag on Hard, we're *spent*.

WHAT ARE THE...

SILVER WEAPONS

Finish the game on Normal to unlock the Silver Weapons for your next playthrough (on Normal mode only). It's not immediately obvious you've got them (all they do is shine a bit more), but they've got infinite ammo. You need to pause to reload, but the bullets keep coming – same goes for the rocket-assisted weapons. Complete the game on Hard, and there's a pump action grenade launcher (press L2) on the M16A2. Handy. (See below.)

Annoyingly, you need to complete the game on Hard to unlock Silver Weapons in Hard mode. It's a bit arse-to-face, given the difficulty.

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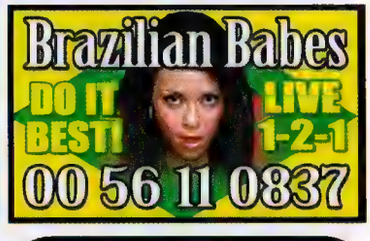

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RESPECT DUE!

It's been a great month. Not only have you lot put *Shadow Of The Colossus* at number one in the charts but even stuffy old EA are breaking the mould with their er... *brave* packshot design for *We Love Katamari*. Hats off then to EA's brand new Upper Titchmarch Under 7's Packaging Design Department!

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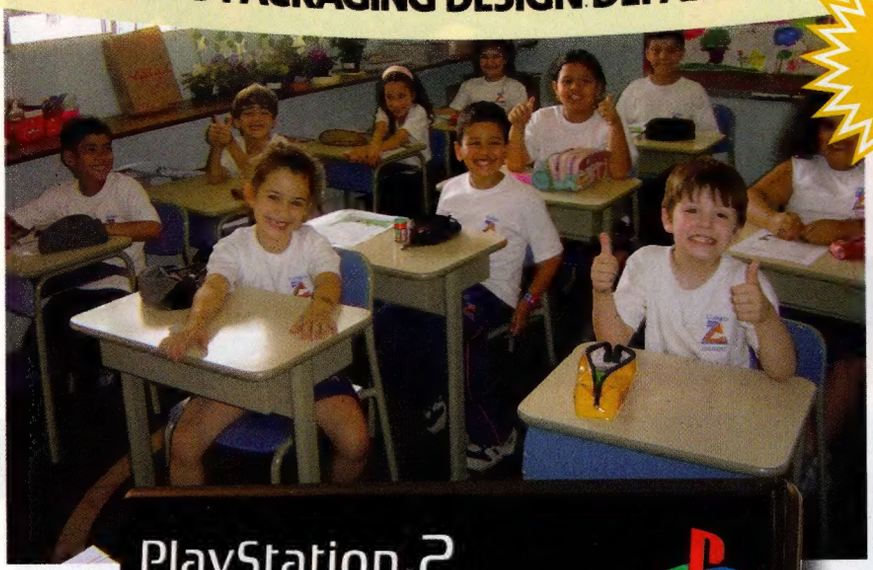

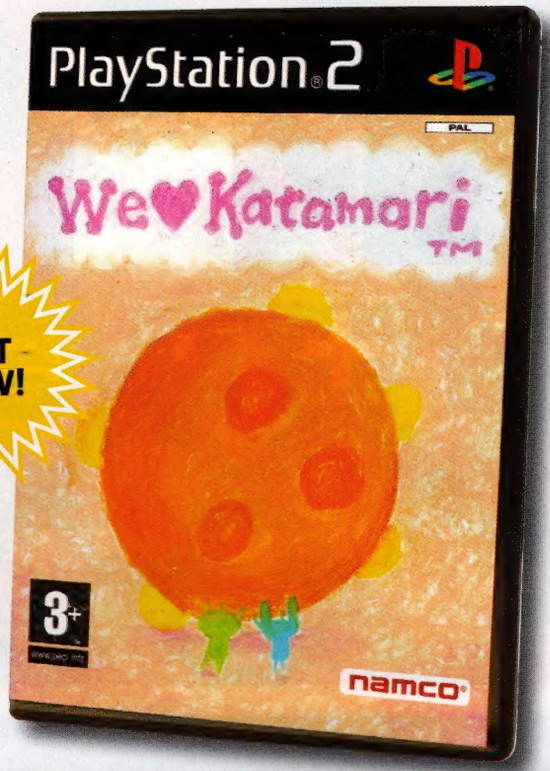

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